

# Mexican Life

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MARCH, 1950

No. 3, Vol. XXVI



Water Color

By Ramón Espino Barros



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# Mexican Life

Mexico's Monthly Review

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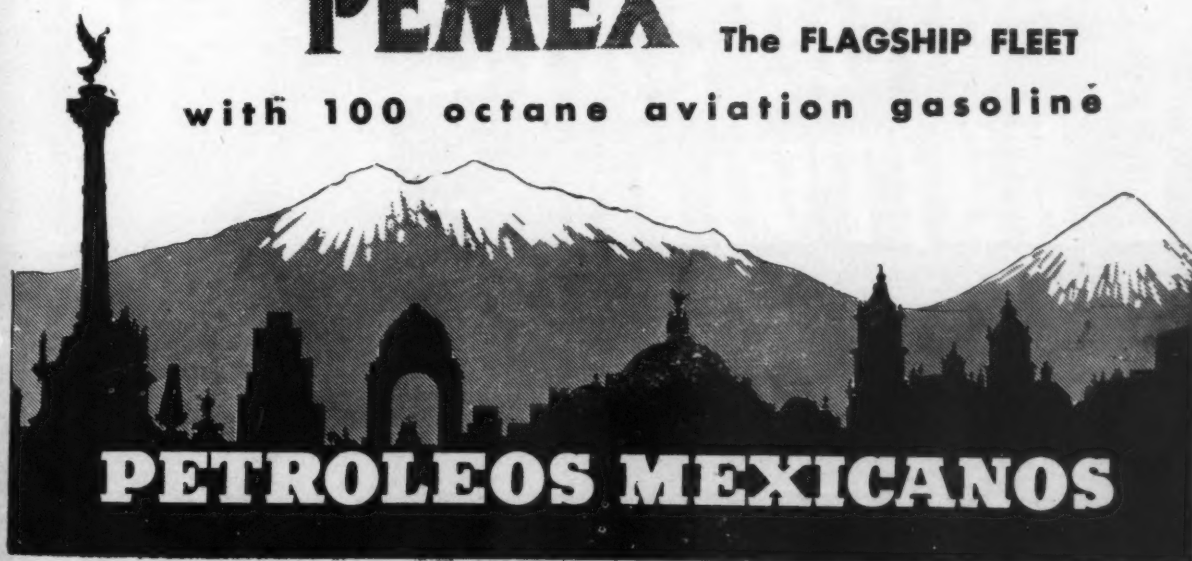
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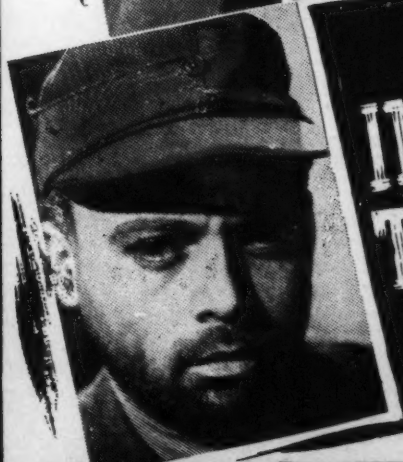
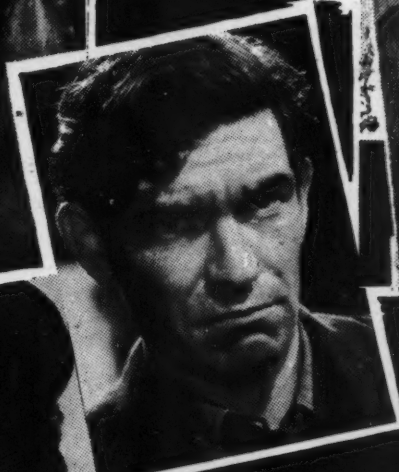
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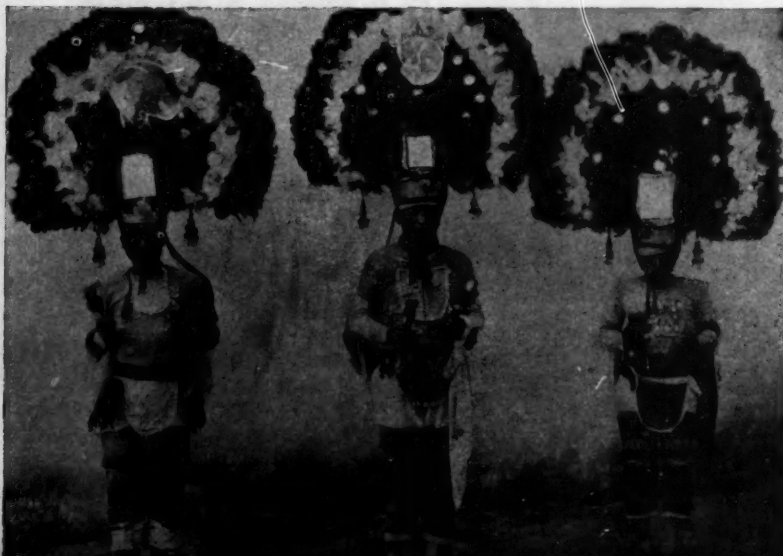
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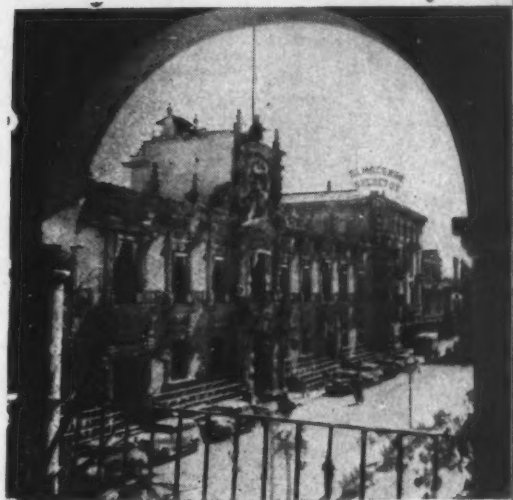
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HOWARD S. PHILLIPS  
EDITOR

## Chapopotli

**L**ONG before the Spanish invader set his foot on this soil the Aztecs utilized for medicinal purposes and in their religious rituals a tarry inflammable substance they called chapopotli. The Spaniards, seeking the reward of their conquest in precious ores, were not aware that the black smelly stuff was one of the great treasures hidden in the entrails of the lands they had conquered.

It was in 1901, almost four centuries after the Conquest, that the treasure of chapopotli was finally discovered. During that year the dictator Porfirio Diaz, in keeping with his "wide open door" policy, issued the first concessions to foreigners for the exploitation of Mexico's petroleum resources. The concessions were extremely favorable to the producers and provided for exemption from import duties on importation of drilling equipment and all other necessary supplies, exemption from export taxes, as well as from Federal taxes on invested capital for a period of ten years.

By the end of 1936, the total investment of the foreign oil companies in Mexico, growing out from the concessions issued by Porfirio Diaz, represented the sum of 346,311,478 pesos, while the total production covering the thirty-five years was that of 1,865,056 barrels, with the value of 3,726,036,151.00 pesos.

The enormous profits reaped by foreign interests from Mexican oil were, however, of comparatively slight benefit to the Mexican nation. The country was rapidly depleting one of its most important reserves of natural wealth in exchange for a payroll and modest taxation. Petroleum, therefore, played its share in feeding the flames of discontent which produced the decade of civil strife whose ideals were defined in the new Federal Constitution of 1917. This Constitution modified the laws governing the ownership of oil lands, bringing them into the domain of nationalized subsoil, whose exploitation could be undertaken only by means of government concession. The enforcement of the new regulations in 1925 brought on a series of disputes between the Mexican Government and the foreign oil companies, contributing toward a renewed period of civil strife and gravely injuring this country's international relations.

Although these disputes were eventually settled in an apparent *modus vivendi*, the following decade could be described as a state of "cold war" between the oil companies and the government, which culminated twelve years ago this month with a decree issued by President Cárdenas for the nationalization of the entire petroleum industry by means of legal expropriation.

In the history of Mexico this daring and perilous act defined a step toward the achievement of national economic and political emancipation comparable only to the Reform Laws promulgated by Benito Juárez in 1859. In freeing one of the major sources of national wealth from foreign control this decree not

only served Mexico's economic interests, but it lent veritable validity to its sovereignty as a nation. In having the courage to defy the most powerful oil combines in the world and to confront the inevitable international controversies, Mexico eliminated the most serious obstacle in its pursuit of friendly international relations.

March 18, 1938 was a decisive and hazardous date in Mexican history. For in nationalizing the petroleum industry the Mexican Government incurred an external obligation to pay for it to its former owners within a specified period of time, as well as an internal obligation with its people to administer this industry with success.

Facing such multiple problems at the outset as the lack of trained technicians, obsolete equipment, loss of export markets and shortage of operating capital, the nationalized oil industry met the challenge. It has operated on a solvent basis, it has met all its obligations and has achieved sustained progress year after year.

The true extent of this progress can be estimated in the following statistical figures: In 1938 Mexico's production of crude oil amounted to 38,482,500 barrels. In 1949 this figure rose to 62,097,308 barrels. In 1938 the industry paid to the government in taxation a total of 54,675,000 pesos; in 1949 this total multiplied to 335,397,675.00 pesos. The most notable progress, representing an increase in average daily production from 160,000 barrels to well over 200,000, has been achieved during the foregone twelve months, and according to reliable calculations this daily average will reach the figure of 300,000 barrels before the end of the current year.

The prosperous development of this industry has coincided with the general industrial development of this country during the foregone twelve years, which, on the other hand, has been stimulated to a very important extent by the abundant supply and low cost of fuel oil. The enormous increase in the domestic consumption of oil, resulting from the vast industrial expansion, has freed this industry from dependence on exports for its principal revenues.

But the psychological influence exerted upon the popular mind by the decree of nationalization has been even a more significant factor in animating the trend of industrialization than its practical benefits. It gave the Mexicans a sense of confidence in their own ability to administer large enterprises. It imbued them with a spirit of a new independence. It freed them from a sense of inferiority, of a negative mental attitude which they inherited from their Colonial past, and released latent energies for an era of vast constructive progress.

Thus, March 18 th., 1938 actually signified a turning point in the economic, social and political evolution of this nation.



# In Duress

By Henry Albert Phillips

**V**ISITING the prisons of a country is not always the fairest means of approximating the extent of its criminal status. It has been said that jails are filled largely with unfortunate malefactors, while many of the real criminals are clever enough to keep out by means of cunning lawyers and bribery.

"Crime is so largely a matter of public opinion," said my friend in Cuernavaca. "Its status has varied widely, according to the period, to the temperament of a people, to their teachings and sometimes, to latitude and longitude. It should be judged and gauged according to native standards, precepts and codes of morals. I wish that visiting Americans would remember that. For it would seem to them that in Mexico certain intolerable types of crime are allowed to flourish, while other kinds are punished by the citizenry, 'taking the law in their own hands.' There's some of that on both sides of the Rio grande. Frankly, as the rest of the civilized world looks at the United States—documented by countless actual examples seen in the American-made movies and read in their press—it seems like the most lawless of lands. I agree, that we have no potent regulative public opinion down here that would in a measure curb certain crimes. For example: A man recently went into a small sweet-shop in Cuernavaca and helped himself to chocolates announcing, 'I do not pay.' 'But,' pleaded the proprietor, 'I am a poor man. I must have pay,' and he seized the culprit by the arm. The stranger whipped out the unforbidden gun and shot the shopkeeper dead. His child began to cry and pulled the murderer's coat. He shot the child. The court sentenced him to a short term. This could not happen in the 'States because of public opinion, which would, have sent him to the chair, or more likely lynched him.'"

In the case of the penitentiary on the outskirts

of Mexico City, The Federal Prison, I was impressed by the long files of visitors waiting to be admitted. I was surprised to find the majority of them Indians, with perhaps forty per cent mestizos and the remainder whites. Each and every one carried food and delicacies, some of them complete sets of cooking utensils. Just before the visitors were admitted into the inner prison, the two score soldier guards were fed in the fore courtyard. They tumbled out of their nearby bunks in various states of deshabille, some laying down their muskets anywhere, others putting them in the unguarded rack near the porter's lodge; all of the weapons uncomfortably handy in case the more desperate-looking friends of the prisoners in the queue might decide on assisting in a jail-break.

For several years past. I was told, the prison had been overflowing its destined capacity. Orderliness was not on the calendar anywhere. A motley group of uniformed guards at the gate entering the prison yard were deeply engaged in personal conversation and we might almost have entered or come out without attracting their notice. Once inside, one got an inescapable impression of chaos. Looming above was a tall steel and concrete observation tower where we could see a number of sharpshooters lazily handling their guns. Guards patrolled the typical prison walls, their short muskets on their shoulders, their forms etched harshly against the horizon of freedom. Class consciousness was in evidence. High-class prisoners with money seemed to have the run of the open spaces near the gates. There was even a bootblack to attend to their wants.

Nearly all the prisoners were smoking, lounging about, and some eating the delicacies that wives, mothers and sweethearts had brought to them. To the right and to the left were the many small industries carried on, although prisoners were free to choose whether or not they wanted to work and earn a few extra pesos, which they seemed to spend immediately on luxuries. We visited the printing shops where several of the great colored comic five-centavo magazines for both children and grownups were printed. There was a small casting foundry, a furniture-making factory, etc.

In many cases there were no guards in sight, and there was certainly little discipline. This was uncomfortably evidenced when we penetrated deeper into the maze of barred interiors and were annoyed by several convicts who were on the verge of becoming violently angry when we did not buy some of the gewgaws they had carved from nuts and pieces of wood. One of them had to be forcibly taken away. We were told that he was a narcotic addict. The central portion of the prison was divided into gigantic cages filled with cells, all swarming with idling men. I fancied that Old Newgate, described by Dickens, must have been something like this.

As in the United States, each state in Mexico has its own penitentiary. The one in Puebla was outstanding, in many ways. Visitors to that city will surely recall the huge rectangular pile of masonry well within the city on the main street as they come in from La Capital. It occupies an entire large block and its massive walls are built of brick and granite blocks, castellated, with corner towers like a medieval fortress. Again and again it has had sufficient reasons

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Water Color.

By Roberto Cueva del Rio.



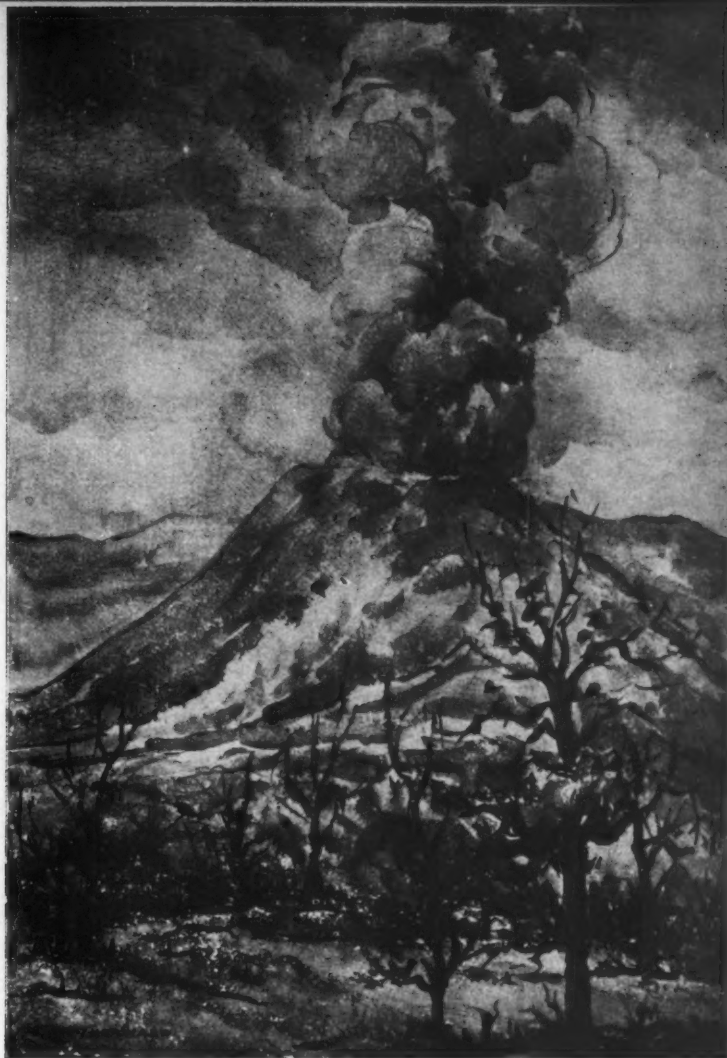
# Quiroga

By Hudson Strode

**B**ETWEEN Morelia and Quiroga, the towns named after two unorthodox priests, the red land is rich and rolling—soil worth a man's taking root in and calling it home with pride as well as affection. Along with the ageless activities of plowing and sowing, new cottages were being built to afford a better protection against wind and weather, and with more space in which to raise a family. They were plain and simple houses, functional in design, but not unattractive, and they looked as if in time they too could sink their roots deep into the soil. The obvious sense of indomitable stability about them recalled Spengler's line, "The peasant's dwelling is the great symbol of settledness."

These countryfolk were earth-bound in the good sense. As Spengler said, "He who digs and ploughs is seeking not to plunder, but alter nature. To plant implies not to take something, but to produce something." And those who had never been peons, but have lived on the land of their forefathers continuously, have remained essentially untouched by history. One felt that they have a mystic communion with the soil, and if they were transported to another part of the Republic, they could still speak to the earth under any regime or ideology.

Quiroga, which bears the name of that extraordinary Spanish Bishop whose influence extended from Morelia all around the lake of Pátzcuaro, is merely a village in which time has stood still. But it possesses a charming little plaza with a pleasing church at the far end and two parallel rows of colonnaded one-story buildings on the sides. Benches are set at intervals under clipped trees, but except for one lone figure walking the promenade as in a distorted dream, the plaza was deserted in these morning hours. The



Water Color.

By Clara Thorward.

figure was an old man, ragged and dirty, halt in the limbs and half-blind and bleary-eyed with syphilis—a legacy from the Spaniards, along with the memorable architecture. With the jerks and contortions of a grotesque mechanical figure he made a groping progress about the square, like a mute town crier warning citizens of the wages of sin. But the youngsters spinning tops on the street at the open end of the plaza paid the old man no heed whatever, though they paused in their play to ogle a young nubile girl bearing a water jar on her shapely head.

The only thing memorable about Quiroga besides that tarnished jewel of a plaza was a troop of long-eared donkeys laden with heaps of lacquer-ware jars and bowls all tied loosely in bales of rope net. With the midmorning sun shining full upon the train, a myriad colors flashed—emerald, ruby, turquoise, topaz. The little mousecolored beasts looked as if they might be chattels of some Ali Baba and forty thieving confederates who were moving their gem-encrusted treasures from one mountain cave to another. But when the donkey train came closer, the wares proved to be of small value. This batch had been turned out with more thought given to tourist sale than to pride of workmanship. The better pieces of lacquer were to be found in Uruapan, where we were bound, and where Quiroga's mortal career had ended.

All the territory beyond Quiroga is associated with the memory of the Bishop who saw the necessity of hand-in-hand co-operation of the Indians' spiritual redemption with material benefits. The poverty and misery of the Indians had made an incisive impression on Quiroga's heart—"some going naked through the market place," he wrote, "looking for something to eat which the swine have left."



Born in Spain in 1470 of a distinguished and well-to-do family, educated to be a lawyer, Quiroga came to Mexico when he was sixty. He came not as a priest, but as a high official of government, an *oidor*. The missionary zeal struck him after he beheld the crying needs of the Indians. He spent his generous salary on them, establishing a hospital for them near Mexico City. He studied their aptitudes, as well as their problems, and sought by a kind of instinctive psychotherapy of his own devising to bring them out of the terrible shock and dismay wrought by the Conquest and the wrenching away from their pagan worship. Six months after his arrival he wrote: "There is no way of putting them in order or promoting good Christian life, eliminating drunkenness, idolatry, and other evils, unless they can be placed together in well-ordered communities." It was his idea that no one had the right to superfluous goods so long as others lacked bare necessities.

An opportunity came to put his mildly socialistic ideas into practice among the Tarascans of Michoacán, who were in a most disorganized state after the incomparable stupidities and cruelties of Nuño de Guzmán. Within a fifty-mile circuit about Lake Pátzcuaro numerous villages were established or rearranged in Quiroga's way. As the center of his communities Quiroga erected a house for the sick and a chapel. Then he built a series of dwellings each large enough to accommodate some ten families. The hours for co-operative labor in the fields were six. The other hours were the Indians' own for agriculture or handicrafts, so that those who were markedly skillful or diligent should receive some extra reward for their labor.

With a natural sense of economics, Quiroga arranged matters so that each village made a specialty of one or two handicrafts. One village specialized in woven blankets, another in metal goods. One village was taught to fashion holy images out of maize paste. Another made chocolate-frothers, which were sold in the capital. Paracho became famous for its musical instruments, Uruapan for its lacquer. Today good guitars come from Paracho and some of the best lacquer ware in the hemisphere comes from Uruapan. The pottery Quiroga established at Camanja continues to do business after four centuries.

The Emperor was highly impressed with Quiroga's great success in pacifying the Indian not with the sword, but with good deeds and understanding. When it was decided to establish Michoacán, and the Emperor was casting about for a worthy bishop, the administrator Quiroga kept coming to his mind. Finally he did a most extraordinary thing: He presented to the Pope the name of a layman for the Bishop of Michoacán. And the far-seeing Pope gave his blessing to the choice. Quiroga, who had never been a priest or even studied theology, was ordained and consecrated a bishop on a December day in 1538.

The famous Archbishop Zumárraga, who presided at the ceremony, was so well pleased with the choice that he wrote the Spanish monarch complimenting him on his "stroke of good judgment" in appointing this man who "adds luster to us prelates in this country." He reminded His Majesty that Quiroga had spent his entire salary in providing hospitals for his Christian Indians and family dwellings and flocks to sustain them. "When he has become the pastor, one can believe that he will do even greater things for his sheep, although I do not know of any other who has equaled him in this land... He has put us bishops, and particularly the friars, to shame."

In the years between 1539 and 1543 Quiroga built many schools of various categories, and encouraged

the exchange of language study between Spanish and Tarascan youths. In his work of stabilizing the Indians and making them prosperous, he was accused by jealous enemies of not doing his churchly duties in ordaining, baptizing, conforming. But he could prove to his enemies that he had traveled on mule-back some six hundred leagues, holding communion services and baptizing, with only one chaplain and one page to assist him. In his ninety-fifth year he was still going on periodic inspection tours, bestowing spiritual and material blessings as he went.

\* \* \*

The little town that immortalized Quiroga's name lies at a crossroads. The highway goes straight on to Guadalajara, Mexico's second largest city. The road to the left goes to Pátzcuaro and Uruapan. But Uruapan can also be reached most agreeably by first taking the highway and then at Carapán circling over the mountains. We took the long way.

From an eminence in the road we got our first real view of the lake called Pátzcuaro, which means in Tarascan "Place of Delights." Serenely it stretched farther than we could see, holding within its thirty-mile circumference a steadfast yet ever changing loveliness. Sometimes it was said to be like a slab of aquamarine, sometimes it was a soft blue like turquoise, sometimes it was milky jade. This morning it was more like an opal, reflecting in its depths floating canopies of pink-tinted clouds, green masses of mountain foliage, the blue-gray flanks of pendent rocks. And as we curved on the road this way and that, now higher, now lower, mauve shadows shifted like gigantic water lilies.

Señor Sánchez stopped the car and we stood on the edge of a cliff to gaze. Pátzcuaro lies nearer to the sun than any navigable lake in Mexico—six thousand and seven hundred and seventeen feet above its watery neighbor the Pacific, which lapped the coast less than a hundred and fifty miles away. We wondered if it was its high situation that gave the lake and its environs such special flavor and distinction. Here was no wild and luxuriant beauty like that of Brazil's magnificent hothouse. The situation was too high for nature to adorn with a prodigal hand. The mountains did not tumble and spill over each other. There was no too-muchness of anything. Beauty was restrained, cool, selective. The views in twelve directions were as clearcut as Japanese prints, with more color. But they were not colors to be reproduced in lush oils or in dusty pastels. They were something suggesting hard crayon or some Hindu colored ink. In its clarity of outline against the pure cerulean blue of the sky, in some ineffable quality of composition, it was different from any other scene on the continent. And it touched some response in the soul rather than in the senses. The road keeps more or less in sight of the lake for some ten miles before plunging into another series of mountains and fertile valleys. At length a projecting side of a mountain came like a thrust screen between the lake and us, and we were not to see it again until we had completed a sixty-mile circuit.

After Quiroga, whichever road you take north or west, it is as if you have vaguely crossed the frontier into another land. There are rude pagodalike gateways before all the huts, to cheer the roadway. Whereas the typical Mexican house is flat-roofed, here, whether houses are of bamboo or wattle or stone, the roofs are thatched, and the steep roof lines have an Oriental sweep. Even the wide flat hats of the men add to the illusion; the brims do not curve

Continued on page 60





Lithograph.

By Marshall Goodman.

## Sobremesa

By W. P. Covington-Lawson

**W**E WERE seated on a little raised platform, which was built at the end of the patio in such way that one could view from it at a glance whatever activities might be going on in the drying of coffee. Now, however, a perfect calm reigned in the patio. The crop was all done; the peones from the hills had returned to their villages, and the silence was as heavy as the humid atmosphere. One still felt the tepid dust of the wind that a moment before had rushed through the banana groves—a sluggish stirring like the belching of some giant who groaned in his sleep—and one knew that soon the rains would come marching up the valley, pounding the sere earth like throngs of troops with glistening bayonets.

Don Carlos Montes de Guevarra, my host, belonged to the seventh generation of a sturdy breed that had tilled but never tamed the soil of these picturesque highlands. He had traveled widely in his younger days, had read considerably, loved abundantly, and now completely bored ruled his domain with an iron though compassionate hand. His peones worshipped him; his children—several girls in their teens—adored him, and his wife, it seemed to me, had never been able to make up her mind whether she loved

him or feared him or if she had indeed ever truly known him.

Having, during the many years of our acquaintanceship, periodically transacted some business with him, which in keeping with local custom involved its indispensable details of supplementary amenities, I had grown sincerely fond of him—principally, perhaps, because of his peculiar questioning, querulous, groping mind. I was always stimulated by the odd twists and turns it assumed at random and with startling suddenness.

He had invited me to spend a few days with him, during some holidays, and since strangers are rarely taken into the homes of the gentry on such occasions, I naturally felt quite flattered and pleased. There were besides some pending business matters which I had hoped to wind up during my visit.

We had been resting quietly on this little terrace overlooking the deserted patio when Tia Luta, one of the humbler members of the household, came out with a tablecloth and with mumbled *con permisos* commenced spreading it over a small wicker table. Presently she fetched a tray with an ancient copper teapot and some cups and saucers.

Don Carlos looked at the steaming teapot, then shook his head with disapproval. "Look, Tia Luta," he said. "We have with us as our guest a gringo of the very highest category. But you should know by now that gringos of any category do not like tea. They must have their hooiskee, something that has a little kick in it. So be good enough to bring the hooiskee."

He turned at me smiling. "I see you wince when I call you gringo. Frankly, I see no reason why you should. To my own way of thinking it implies a compliment. It refers to a citizen of a country where the green grass grows, and that, on the other hand, means more cattle, more calories and a tougher civilization. In our country we have too many deserts and good green grass is at a premium. Therefore, we get our calories from beans and tortillas instead of your delicious filet mignons..."

I laughed at his observations, and remembering our unfinished business transaction refrained from saying anything that might launch a serious discussion. I adamantly, however, refused the whiskey, which was not whiskey in any language, pleading a bad liver, and was compelled in the end to drink an insipid brew, made of lemon leaves, that came out of the teapot.

"Speaking of hooiskee, gringos, and other kindred subjects," said Don Carlos, "reminds me of our delightful conversation after supper last night. It will live with me for a long time. We were talking about civilization—what it is, what it means, what is its end. We were asking ourselves: where is it leading us? Is it worth while? Were not indeed our ancestors better off in those so-called Golden Ages of the past, when they were not shrouded with its modern benefits?"

Don Carlos was silent for a brief spell, then smiled at me quizzically. "My friend," he said, "have you ever attended one of our bull fights, and amid the pageantry, the noise and excitement perceived the pause when everyone holds his breath for a moment—the moment when the trumpeter blares the wistful yet imperative order... when the judge has spoken and his command is sped in fluid musical notes both to the fighters and the bull... the command that death is now imminent? If you perceived that moment of music heralding blood, you might have perceived the essence in our attempt to civilize ourselves."

My host paused again, as if to give me time to ponder, then continued:

"Yes. Death is the answer. But there is always the preceding musical note. The brave bulls, my friend, women, wine, music, death... all these are ours. And yours? Power, money, success. Roaring machines. Huge buildings. Smug, fat, self-satisfied men of big affairs... We call you gringos. In our minds the word does not define complex implications. It is just a term—a convenient term which identifies certain foreigners. It contains no opprobrium. Just a term that has originated somewhere in the forgotten past and that has come into common usage."

"You, on the other hand, call us Latins. But what does that term define? What are Latins? Spanish, Indian, Negro—a little of this and a little of that. Sweet and sour, white, brown, yellow or red—we are the Latins. Mexicans, Cubans, Brazilians, Perú, Patagonia—you've lumped us all under a convenient common name."

He broke off and again smiled at me quizzically. "And how about yourselves—the mighty offspring of the great Colossus of the North? Surely, in the whole world there is no greater mixture of bloods—of the white and red, of the black and yellow—from the tropics to the poles, poured in from everywhere into the one huge kettle which you have kept brewing incessantly... Yes; the whole world admits that you have made a most appetizing stew of all these odd ingredients, and that same world stands today humbly with bowl in hand, waiting to be doled out the sustenance you have produced from your fertile fields and roaring factories... You are indeed the super-race, the amalgam of all the races. And since you are essentially nameless you call yourselves Americans. But who are you? The mother race, presumably British, is now but an infinitesimal fraction of your amazing complex. And what of the mighty offspring?"

"You have been monstrously acquisitive. You have gorged yourselves on the best of everything, including the loveliest, the most desirable of women. You've drawn them to your shores from all the lands, and they have borne your children. And their children have mated and re-mated among themselves, have fused and re-fused their bloods, until finally they have produced a new species—the American... We have sometimes resented your acquisitiveness, your taking of our entire continent to give yourselves a name. But that, of course, is foolish. Quite foolish. We have given in long ago. You are indeed the only Americans!"

"But this thing, I daresay, is not finished. Now the time has arrived for further admixture of blood. The Latin with the American. The barriers are being broken. The frontiers are crossed. It is only a vicarious admixture as yet. Our women secretly sighing over your handsome cinema actors—romantically longing for the perfect male. But they are building roads, and your automobiles are becoming as thick as flies. Soon travel will be everybody's privilege. So, my good friend, the Cosmic Race is on the way."

He broke off abruptly, dismissing the subject with an emphatic wave of his hands. "Well," he said, "I suppose that will be enough of that. I have taken an unfair advantage of the situation. I know that you have come to buy my coffee, and instead of that I have made you endure my philosophical ramblings. Yes; living up to your own notion about us Latins. I have kept you dangling for almost a week, never permitting you to open up on business matters. So I must apologize to you and thank you as well, for you have been most patient and kind... However," he added with a trace of a wink in his eye, "I suspect that your patience has been largely due to your knowing all along that I have decided to give you my crop, that is, when we thrash out the minor details regarding the price and so on..."

He rose to his feet and invitingly pointed his hand. "Come, let us get into the house. Our women feel that they are being cheated. They like to know more about you fabulous Americans—you big bustling men of action who allow your own women to lead you about with a ring in your nose... Our women would like to know how it is done, and besides they like to see you snort and puff around when there is no one holding the string... Come, my friend, they are waiting for dinner."





Oil.

By Margarita C. de Weihmann.

## Through the Gales

By Dana Lamb

It was a beautiful tropical morning. The air was as soft and as bland as cream. There was no wind, and the great inland sea was like a burnished mirror. No wind meant we should have to paddle. It would take us all day to reach the shore line, but neither one of us cared. In the clear air, the pampa to the east merged into the high mountains of Chiapas. The whole world was a symphony in blue. Mountains, sea, and sky were infinite gradations of azure, turquoise, and soft hazy blue-greys that melted into each other. After yesterday's experience, it seemed to me that I could never get enough of simply looking at great, unfilled spaces. Yet there was a fly in the ointment of this perfection—a vague sense of uneasiness. Something about the venture was ill-timed. I tried to localize it without success. This was the only calm weather we had had in weeks. There was no sign of wind anywhere. On the surface, conditions were ideal.

We paddled along in silence. Perhaps this premonitory feeling was only the ebb tide of the continuous excitement to which we had been subjected. In postponement, and in returning to camp would lie the real danger. The Mareños would be out fishing in their canoes during this calm. The smoke from our campfire must have been seen. Once again I scrutinized the horizon. The high mountains to the east still wore their halos of grey-blue haze, to us an unmistakable sign of good weather.

Perplexed and rather shamefaced, I turned to Ginger. "I've got another hunch, though heaven knows why—"

"So have I," she interrupted. "We'd better go back."

Since we were only a half mile from shore, we decided to stay there and enjoy a leisurely swim while awaiting further developments. We splashed round in the warm water, keeping an eye out for sharks, and then stretched out on deck to let the sunshine soak in. A half hour passed in which nothing unusual occurred. "Damn!" I said, "I'll bet we won't have another chance to cross this pampa for two weeks."

"That may be true," Ginger answered, "but nevertheless, I don't think it's wise to go off in the face of this hunch—or whatever it is."

"We're always between the devil and the deep blue sea," I grumbled. "If we were back in camp with the wind down, the mosquitoes would eat us alive. And if we don't get out of here, every naked devil on the lagoon will be out in his canoe, looking for something to shoot at. The time we're free from mosquitoes and Mareños is when it's worth our life to travel."

We played round for a half hour, and were going over the side for another dip when I saw a phenomenon to the north that riveted my attention—a hard black line that looked as though it were drawn in India ink. We both looked at it. "I wonder what it means?" puzzled Ginger. "I've never seen anything like it before."

"I don't know," I answered. "Say, look at the mountains!" White clouds rolled over their crests, skimming down their sides as though a giant were pouring milk over them. Then I knew. We were



watching the inception of the dread hurricane, whose local name is Tehuantepec, a norther in its most destructive aspect.

There was no time to lose. We grabbed the paddles and struck out for shore. Mareños and mosquitoes be damned. That shell beach was our only place of refuge. As we sped shoreward, the black line widened, and its lower edge turned to white. We knew what that creeping line of white meant. The wind was rolling up the pampa into a wall of foaming water, which rushed across the lagoon like an avalanche. In its resistless force it was overwhelming. Great clouds torn loose from their mountain moorings scudded across the darkening sky.

The canoe skidded underneath the mangroves and shot into the beach. Not for us, this time, a careful calculated handling of our equipment. We threw the boxes on the beach. The canoe must be gotten out of harm's way before that rushing wall of water engulfed it and smashed it to kindling wood. While we worked, short choppy seas began pounding the shore. At last we and our possessions were out of the water, but by no means safe yet from the gale. Battling against a wind that knocked us on our haunches, we dragged our things and rolled the canoe into the shelter of the wind-break. And thanked our lucky stars that it was ready for our use, and that we were there to use it. We were drenched in spray from the great clouds of vapour that roared across the pampa to dash themselves against the mangroves. The air seemed to be full of the shrieks of ten thousand fire engines. Black columns of water, with whitened crests, spun about like whirling dervishes.

Safe behind the sheltering windbreak, Ginger unrolled the sleeping bag and stretched out on it. "Imagine being out in that," she said. "Dan, from now on, as long as we live, let's play our hunches."

"Listen," I answered. "It's more dangerous to get a fixed idea in our minds about hunches than to disregard them. We don't know anything about them, really. Suppose we refused to act unless we had a 'hunch.' First thing you know, all our decisions would be based on feeling instead of logic and reason. I think it's bad business to form conclusions about things when we only know part of the story."

"What about the quicksand? What about this storm?" Ginger argued. "How could we reason either situation out from the data we had? This morning this camp, full of mosquitoes and potential Mareños, was all wrong. The calm, peaceful pampa was right. Now this is right and the other wrong."

"You're answering your own argument," I said. "Nothing's inherently right or wrong in either situation. The circumstances changed, and consequently we reversed our position. We have to shift with the times. Nature does it, nothing there follows a straight line. The birds aren't on the lagoon now, or in the air, they're in the mangroves. Remember, most of our premonitions have to do with weather. The explanation is probably exceedingly simple. The blowing up would have some effect on the area just ahead of it, naturally. It may have increased the air pressure. This would in turn affect our ears, and our subconscious mind would transfer it into a warning. Or it may have caused a change in the electrical content of the air, which might have some effect on us. Yesterday we walked across ground that probably vibrated beneath our feet—and we were too tired to notice. But that doesn't mean that because our conscious faculties sometimes fail to report things that we must necessarily remain unaware of them. There may be a special kind of hyper-sensitivity that operates in moments of extreme danger. These are matters, however, that we can't be too sure of, and it's

highly doubtful that they are wholly dependable. See what I mean?"

"You're probably right," Ginger conceded. "It's the middle way between the two extremes that we have to follow. I'm glad we talked this over. I'd begun to take our hunches a little too seriously."

I was also glad that we had talked it over, for there had been a rather remarkable series of coincidences of this nature during our months of travel. It was becoming increasingly easy to rely on premonitions rather than on ourselves. And that, I felt, was a highly dangerous procedure. Eventually it would undermine our common sense. As I had observed it, there was a variability about life and the operation of natural laws that precluded hasty generalizations based on limited data and ill-digested facts. The human mind is too prone to incorporate scanty knowledge into systems, interpretations, and formulas. Or it seizes an idea advanced as a pure speculation only, and decks it out in the mantle of indisputable fact.

There is a tree that grows in the tropics, all of whose seeds look alike. However, they are not alike. True, they grow in the same pod, fall to the ground at the same time, and in every way—but one—exactly resemble each other. Some of the seeds germinate immediately. Others must remain two or three years before they sprout. Still others, under certain conditions, may remain dormant for fifty years or more before they send forth shoots. It certainly would be difficult to formulate an axiom about this tree from hasty observation. Its delayed germination refutes the general belief that fertile seed of the same species in combination with sun, suitable soil, and water always produces new growth within a given period. Indeed, from watching only this one tree, you could make a new rule: Trees of the same species germinate under conditions not wholly dependent on soil, moisture and climate; some unknown factor, determines the time of germination.

After our discussion we began to think about food. If we were to be marooned for any length of time, it might be well to work our way through the mangroves to the lee side of the island and try our luck at fishing. The storm would have driven the fish to the calmer waters of the lee. With luck we might pick up something. Armed with the harpoon and our guns, we waded along the shallow water looking for bait. We soon came upon some odd-looking little fish which stuck their heads out just above the surface of the water. They were all right for bait but too small to harpoon. "How are we ever going to catch them?" I said.

"Shoot them" Ginger answered, drawing a bead on one. Her bullet stunned the fish, and I ran and picked it up—the oddest marine animal we had yet seen. It was perhaps six inches long and was shaped like a catfish. "Dan, it has four eyes," Ginger exclaimed. It had—two perfect pairs of eyes, one pair set above the other. With its upper set, it could see everything above the surface. The other pair informed it of underwater events. We shot enough of them for bait, and began fishing.

The dinner of broiled fish over we went to work checking our equipment. We took good care of it each day, but there were always things that went unnoticed until they received the closest scrutiny. Ginger found weak points in the tent and in the sail which she carefully reinforced. I polished, oiled, and sharpened every piece of metal that had a cutting edge. Each tiny spot of rust was a potential menace that had to be eradicated.

The tent in particular had to be safeguarded from rough or careless handling, since it was the only real protection we had against the insects. The ground

was always swept clean of even the tiniest twig or stone before we set it up. If the ground was rough, we first covered it with palm branches, leaves, or leaf mould as a cushion for the fragile fabric. We never even walked or sat on the tent floor.

Ginger took care of all the fabric, including our clothes, the sail, sleeping bag, grub sacks—anything made of cloth. In addition to this, she took care of the grub box and all it contained: the mess kit, food, and so on. She also attended to her gun and hunting knife. My job was to care for the canoe, all the ropes, lines, and wooden articles of the equipment, including the paddles and the mast; the harpoon; the equipment box and its contents, which included the camera and films, diaries, first-aid, fishing gear, and so on.

At the beginning of the trip I used to tease Ginger about her extreme fussiness. She never touched a grub sack or any article of her domestic equipment if her hands were the least bit soiled. After every meal she scoured and scrubbed each mess pan until it shone. Her reply to my comments was that she liked doing it. In time I also grew to like the task of caring for my tools; quite as much for the satisfaction of knowing that my knives were sharp enough to cut paper, as for the necessity of having them sharp.

The wind went down about seven o'clock. We talked of starting out that night, but decided it would be better to wait just before daylight. Most of our gear we packed, and moved the canoe down to the beach, so that we could set off early the next morning.

The absence of wind increased the likelihood of Mareños. To guard against a surprise visit, we built a large fire in camp to indicate that we were still there, and then quietly made our bed in the canoe. If the Mareños did come to the island, they would confine their attentions to the camp at first. As under other similar circumstances, we took turns standing watch.

I was on watch about 2 A.M. when I began to feel apprehensive. The sensation of being the target for invisible eyes grew until I could stand it no longer. I awakened Ginger. "Better get up, something's wrong," I whispered. She rubbed the sleep out of her eyes and sat up.

We quietly slipped over the side, and made our way to the lee side of the lagoon. There was nothing to be seen there. The water reflected only the light of the stars; not a ripple disturbed its smooth expanse. But I still felt unsatisfied. Leaving Ginger on watch, I stole through the trees and began to encircle the camp. This was productive of nothing unusual. I went back to the beach where I had left Ginger.

"I'm sure I just saw a canoe," she whispered. "I even heard the splash of the poles. It landed in that clump of mangroves behind camp. We'd better pack up the rest of our things and get out of here."

We crept through the trees, quickly transported the balance of the equipment to the beach, and slid the canoe down into the water. As we were stowing away the last of the boxes, a spurt of flame from the camp illumined the darkness, and was followed by the throaty roar of a muzzle-loader. Buckshot rattled through the foliage round us. Ginger ducked behind a tree and sprayed the brush with bullets, while I pushed the canoe into deeper water. There were no answering from shore. The canoe afloat, I pumped shots, while Ginger left her tree and raced for the cockpit. I followed her. We broke all records for swinging the paddles.

Well out of range, we stopped and looked back at our hurriedly vacated shell beach. There was no

sight or sound of a native. We wondered why we had been the recipients of only one load of buckshot, finally concluding that our attackers had only one gun, and neither time nor opportunity to reload. With heart-felt sighs of relief, we bent to the paddles and started across the dark pampa.

After sunrise the whole lagoon became covered with mirages. They were similar to the familiar desert phenomena, except that they were much more vivid and detailed. The water forms a smoother plane for the strata of air to settle upon than the rough contours of the desert. These air strata of different densities bend the light rays passing through them, and act as mirrors. We had seen mirages before, but nothing so weird and beautiful as these distorted, inverted, and elevated landscapes wrought in silver and gold through which we travelled. Only when the sun is near the horizon, in the early morning and late afternoon, are the brilliant golden lights reflected in the mirage. We paddled through an unreal, fantastic world in which nothing was recognizable except the water surrounding the canoe. The optical illusion of a world transformed by the Midas touch was aesthetically satisfying, but hard to navigate in. There were no landmarks to guide us, and we could only keep on paddling in the general direction of the southern shore. We sailed through clumps of golden mangroves, across islands that vanished with our passage.

About ten o'clock the images began to assume grotesque shapes, as though reflected in a disporting mirror, and we knew that the wind was rising. With the memory of yesterday's norther still fresh in our minds, we hoped to be spared another while in the centre of the pampa. A light breeze coming from the north rippled the water, and the mirages vanished. Hoisting sail, we settled down to the business of getting to the nearest shore, which now appeared in the far distance.

We finally did reach the shelter of a point of land on the opposite shore, but not before the oncoming norther had given us one of the most hectic hours in our long career of sailing. A good blow on the ocean was a tame experience compared to the battering of the short, high seas in the shallow lagoon. Time after time the gusts stopped just short of snapping the mast, and ripping the sail to shreds. And we were not yet in the full force of the gale.

As we huddled down in the cockpit behind a clump of sheltering mangroves, Ginger said, "Well, we have the Mareños to thank for saving our necks this time. If we had left at five o'clock as we intended to, we'd have been in the middle of that rumpus by now." We had reached the trees with about two minutes to spare.

After an hour's wait, when the first mad rush of the wind was over, we felt that we could safely travel close inshore. The Mareños kept pretty much to the lagoons we had left, and we looked forward to a release from the necessity of subordinating everything else to guarding against them. The calmer water in the channel was alive with fish which, like ourselves, had come to it for protection against the churning waters of the pampa. We got out the bone jigs and started trolling. Ginger pulled in one fish after another. They were fine fat beauties that looked like bass, and weighed from one to three pounds. With our dinner flopping round in the bottom of the cockpit, we rounded a small point and found a well-sheltered little cove where we stopped to broil them.

At peace with the world after a meal of the succulent fish, we went for a stroll along the beach. On the sand were the tracks of sandals that had been cut from automobile tires. "Hurray!" Ginger shouted.

Continued on page 46





View of Mexico City's splendid new boulevard, the Avenida Insurgentes.

Photographs by LUIS QUINTERO.

# The New Avenida Insurgentes

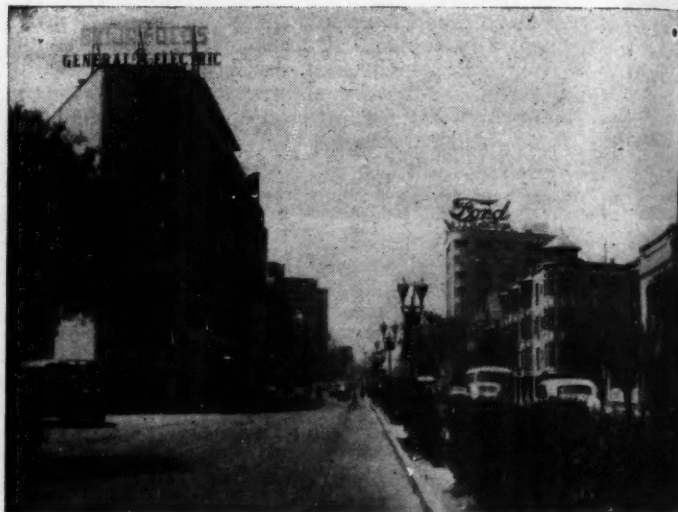
By Gerald Thornby

**T**HE recent inauguration by President Alemán of the new bridge over the Rio Piedad terminates the project carried out by the municipal government which has transformed Avenida Insurgentes throughout its entire extensive length into one of the most beautiful and modern boulevards in Mexico City.

This bridge, with its traffic tunnel and connecting drive-ways, eliminating the final traffic obstruction in this boulevard, is a splendid example of modern engineering. Thoroughly functional in design, it provides an axis for the network of thoroughfares that extends over the South and West sections of the Capital.

In its transformed state the Avenida Insurgentes, honoring the memory of the insurgent leaders of the War of Independence, also bestows honor to the government of the Federal District, headed by Lic. Fernando Casas Alemán. This new avenida serves as a practical demonstration of the progressive spirit which animates this government. The longest thoroughfare in Mexico City, it runs in an arrow-straight line from Villa Obregón to the Paseo de la Reforma, and from this point continues, under distinct sectional names, to the Laredo-Mexico City Highway at the Northeast entrance to the city. Connecting at Villa Obregón with the road to Cuernavaca and Acapulco and with other important highways, Avenida Insurgentes is the city's veritable point of entry and exit for tourist traffic.

A major communication artery through the more select residential districts, in its greatly improved state Avenida Insurgentes is rapidly becoming transformed into a new and ultra-modern shopping and office district. Away from the congestion of the center, department stores and hundreds of smaller retail establishments are making their successful bid for trade along this new commercial avenue.



Avenida Insurgentes at the Corner of Alvaro Obregón.

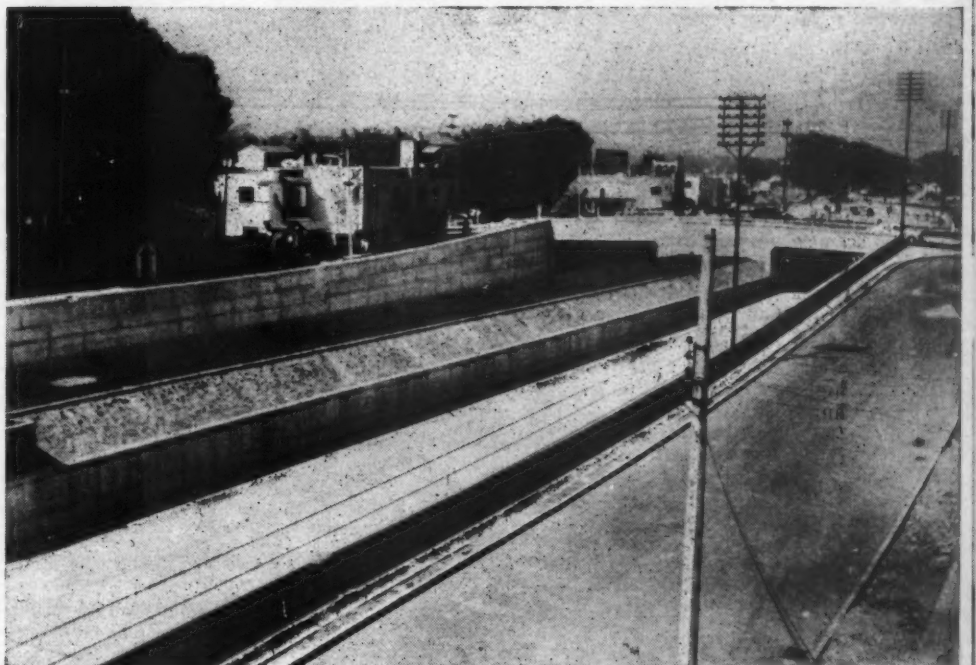


A glorieta at a busy crossing on Avenida Insurgentes.

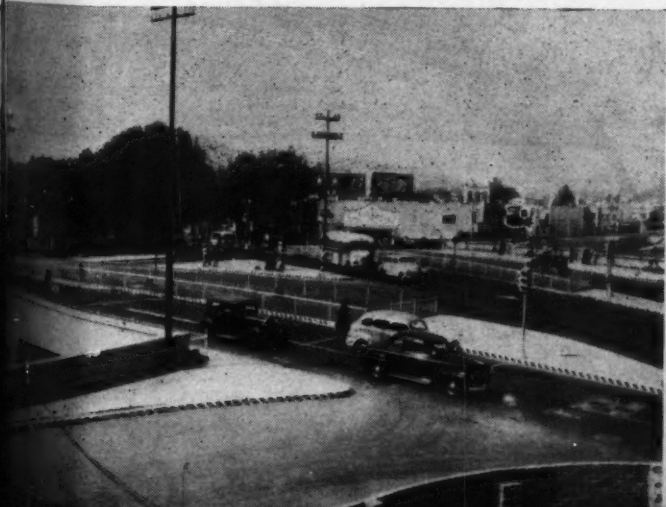
Another view of the new bridge  
which facilitates traffic along  
Avenida Insurgentes.



Tunnel and ramp drive-way  
at the new bridge on Avenida  
Insurgentes.



The spacious new bridge on transformed Avenida Insurgentes.



The bustling new Commercial District along Avenida Insurgentes.





# The Highway Ciudad Juárez-México, D. F. - El Ocotal

By Stewart Morton

**T**WO great highways, jointly traversing the entire length of the Mexican Republic from its Northern to the Southern border, will be officially opened for traffic on the 5th of next May. This momentous act will signify the termination of a titanic project carried out by the people of México and the Federal Government, which has devoted its major resources since the year 1925 in order to link the territory of this Republic with those of the North, Center and South American nations, thus pursuing the international goal to secure peace through a neighborly association among all the inhabitants of this hemisphere.

It was the task of the administration of President Alemán to conclude this grandiose project. The work has been greatly intensified during his period, in the aim to fulfill as rapidly as possible the international obligation to construct the Mexican section of the highway which will unite the New World from the arctic regions all the way to Tierra del Fuego.

Ciudad Juárez, the border city of the State of Chihuahua, is the point of departure from North to South of the first part of this international highway. Known also as the Central Highway, it ends at the City of Mexico. Its second part, which bears the name of Cristobal Colón, extends from this city to El Ocotal, Chiapas, on the Guatemalan border.

The Federal District and twelve of the richest states of the Republic are traversed by this great highway over a distance of 3,440 kilometers. Chihuahua, Durango, Zacatecas, Aguascalientes, Jalisco, Guanajuato, Querétaro, Hidalgo, Mexico, Puebla, Oaxaca and Chiapas will receive the benefits of this route, and will be able, by means of the intersecting highways—Coatzacoalcas, Ver.—Salina Cruz, Oax.; Tampico, Tams.—Barra Navidad, Jal. and Matamoros, Tams.—Mazatlán, Sin.—to transport their multiple products of manufacture, of agriculture and mining. The new road will stimulate interstate commerce with other regions and attract a current of tourists from other parts of Mexico as well as from abroad.

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At this date, the construction along the Highway Ciudad Juárez—Mexico—El Ocotal has reached the following stages:

From Ciudad Juárez, Chih., to a point called El Casco situated at kilometer 907, the grading has been completed, and the road is being surfaced with an asphalt mixture. From this point all the way to Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chis. it is totally paved; from Tuxtla Gutiérrez to San Cristobal las Casas, in process of paving; from San Cristobal to Comitán, passable at all time; likewise from Comitán to El Ocotal, Chis.

Due to the accelerated pace at which the work is being carried out, by the 5th. of May, the date set for the inauguration of this highway, the paving will be entirely finished from Ciudad Juárez, Chih. all the way to San Cristobal las Casas, Chis., or over a length of 3,269 kilometers via the Toluca, route and 3,319 kilometers via the route of Ixmiquilpan, Hgo. A gap passable at all times of the year between San Cris-

tobal las Casas and Comitán, Chis. (84 kilometers) and a road of "cooperación" type, graded and laid over a definitive course, from Comitán to El Ocotal, (87 kilometers) complete the highway. The entire length of the highway, in other words, will be 95% finished.

The Central Highway Mexico—Ciudad Juárez, rated as of first class, has a maximum grade of 6%, a width of 10 meters and a minimum curve radius of 41 meters. The bridges have a road width of 6.70 meters, and the most important among them are: La Saucedá, at kilometer 533, 22.60 meters in length; Atotonilco, at kilometer 888, 82.40 meters; Graceros, kilometer 1123, 50.40 meters; Hidalgo, kilometer 1461, 49.20 meters; Santa Barbara, kilometer 1479, 126.60 meters, and Colorines, at kilometer 1505, 98.60 meters.

The Central Highway Mexico—Ciudad Juárez, does not cross any mountain regions of importance. The zone it traverses is in large part flat or undulated, and solely along some of its sections, in the States of Zacatecas, Durango and the entrance to Chihuahua, the terrain is somewhat broken. Close to the Hacienda de Concepción, beyond Colonia Hidalgo, precisely at kilometer 85, the highway ascends to its highest point, with an altitude slightly beyond 2,400 meters over sea-level. It rises to a like altitude at kilometer 920, beyond Sombrerete. The lowest point is that of 1,200 meters, at Ciudad Juárez.

An alternate route with that of Ixmiquilpan branches off at kilometer 249, Puerta de Palmillas, passing through Toluca, Capital of the State of Mexico; it is 199 kilometers long and is totally paved. From Mexico City to Toluca, 66 kilometers, the highway is of first class, and is 10 meters in width. From the latter point to Palmillas, 133 kilometers, the road is of "cooperación" type and has a width of 7 meters.

A part of the Mexico-Laredo Highway, which was built in the ten year period 1925-1935, at an approximate cost of 8,400,000.00 pesos, comprises the first section of the Highway Mexico—Ciudad Juárez, extending from Mexico City to Portezuelo at kilometer 168. From Portezuelo to Ciudad Juárez it was constructed through State and Federal Government cooperation, representing an approximate investment from 1941 to the end of 1949 of 156,000,000.00 pesos.

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The Highway Cristobal Colón, Mexico—El Ocotal rates as first class as far as the city of Comitán, Chis., with a maximum grade of 6%, minimum curve radius of 41 meters and a width of 10 meters. From Comitán to El Ocotal, 87 kilometers, the road, as mentioned above, is passable at all times. Its present width of 7.50 meters will be eventually enlarged, at such time when the economic development of the region justifies the investment, and brought up to the specifications of a first class road.

The section which extends from Tehuantepec to la Ventosa, kilometer 794 to 836, comprises the Trans-Isthmian Highway Coatzacoalcas—Salina Cruz, and is 12 meters wide. The road-width of the bridges varies from 5.20 to 6.70 meters. For their length and special characteristics the following can be enumerated as

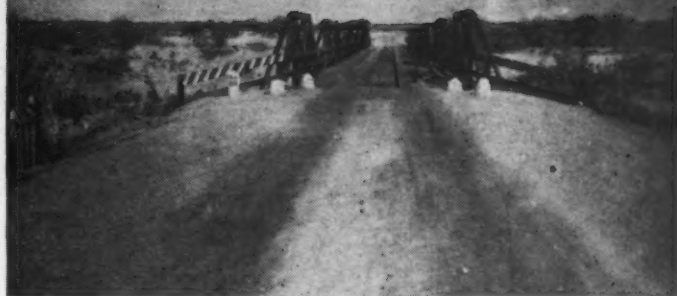
among the most important bridges along this highway: El Marqués, kilometer 215, 49 meters in length; Amatlán, kilometer 257, 79.50 meters; Acatlán, kilometer 265, 79.50 meters; El Salado, kilometer 330, 51.51 meters; Río Oro, kilometer 391, 25 meters; Sinaxtla, kilometer 426, 31.60 meters; Paso superior Las Azucenas, kilometer 550, 35 meters; El Camarón, kilometer 679, 79, 50 meters; Marilú, kilometer 733, 67.10 meters; Tequisistlán, kilometer 756, 197.70 meters; Las Tejas, kilometer 783, 92.60 meters; Las Tortugas No. 1, kilometer 790, 101.10 meters; Tehuantepec, kilometer 794, 123, 90 meters; Los Perros, kilometer 820, 7580 meters; Santo Domingo, kilometer 851, 126.60 meters; Cazadero, kilometer 864, 77.10 meters; Niltépec, kilometer 874, 77.10 meters; Niltépec, kilometer 874, 77.10 meters; Ostuta, kilometer 897, 126.60 meters; Zanatepec, kilometer 903, 49 meters, and Novillero, kilometer 922, 92.60 meters.

The Mexico—El Ocotal Highway Highway unwinds through the Southern part of the Republic, approaching the seaboard of the Pacific in the State of Oaxaca. The orographic aspect of this highway between Mexico City and Oaxaca (547 kilometers) is highly varied, being mountainous in large part, flat or undulated in some sections, namely between Mexico City and the Oaxaca state line. From this point on to kilometer 600, Portillo de San Dionisio, it is predominantly level, and thereon gradually descends to its lowest point at Totolapan. From there to Tequisistlán, kilometer 756, it is mountainous. Crossing the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, the road traverses a low and flat terrain as far as Tepanatepec, from which point it enters the mountain region which extends to a short stretch of level ground close to the border.

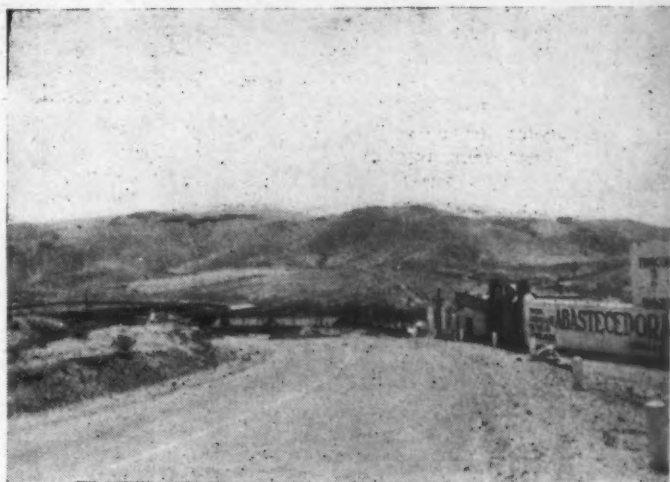
The point of highest altitude, approximately that of 3,200 meters, is situated at Punto del Aire, slightly before reaching Río Frío, at Kilometer 63. The lowest point, that of 75 meters, is between Juchitán and Niltépec, in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec.

The Mexico—El Ocotal Highway has as its initial gap the Mexico City—Puebla road, which was built between the years 1925—1933 at a cost of 9,564,000.00 pesos. The initial work on the Cristobal Colón Highway was actually commenced in 1929, along isolated gaps in the State of Oaxaca, and was suspended in 1931. In 1937 the work was resumed, reaching its most accelerated pace during the last three years.

The total amount of money spent on the construction of this highway since 1925, including the cost of the Mexico City—Puebla road is that of 267,083,000.00 pesos.



Provisional Bridge over Río Florido, at Kilometer 836 traveling from México City to Ciudad Juárez.



The Ciudad Juárez—México, D. F. Highway entering Zacatecas, Zac. from the North.



Sección of the Ciudad Juárez—México, D. F. Highway at Kilometer 781.

Provisional Bridge over Río Florido, at Kilometer 836 traveling from Ciudad Juárez to Mexico, D. F.





# Patterns of an Old City

PEACE BEYOND THE HILLS

By Howard S. Phillips

**I** MET Robert Guernsey a number of years ago while spending a weekend at the house of some friends in Cuernavaca. It was during the time when Cuernavaca became a temporary refuge for an odd assortment of people who were in flight from a war-torn world, and my gregarious hosts, old-time residents in Mexico, evidently finding such people diverting, cultivated an acquaintance among them. Their presence lent a bizarre flavour to any casual gathering, for while some of them were persons of undeniable worth, by and large, despite their enigmatic pasts, they bore a rather obvious stamp. They impressed one as belonging to the type of idlers, of gaudy parasites who in less perilous times frittered away their days in Paris sidewalk cafés or on Mediterranean beaches, and who, having somehow escaped the holocaust and found their way into these uncharted wilds, now continued their aimless though amiable existence around the tranquil plaza of Cuernavaca.

I suppose that it was probably because Guernsey was the least conspicuous and obvious of the crowd that dropped in for highballs on that Sunday afternoon that I found myself chatting with him in a quieter corner of the long arched terrace that faced the garden neatly arranged about a blue-tiled swimming pool. In his middle forties, partly bald, loose-knit and angular of body, save for a mild wonder fixed in his pale-grey eyes, his personality had a faded colorlessness, a stamp of negligibility, that one might associate with a man who had spent his lifetime keeping a set of books in an old-fashioned office.

In the course of our talk I surmised, however, that despite his outward commonplaceness he guarded an inner oddity, a salient discrepant trait, which made his presence in this somewhat baroque gathering quite plausible. Though I also surmised that he was the type of man who does not quite fit in and is ill at ease at almost any gathering. His voice was as colorless as his appearance and his words lacked expression or fluency, and my attentiveness was strained by the hubbub of talk which filled the air; but in the end it was a remark he had made about the peculiar similarity he had found in the native rural life of Mexico with that of Sinkiang that arrested my attention.

"Sinkiang?" I said, my mind groping through forgotten geography. "That, if I am right, is somewhere in China. I take it that you 've been there."

"Yes," he said. "I 've spent nearly three years there. It's an out of the way place, though it's about twice the size of Texas. If you look at the map you 'll find that it lies at the heart of Asia, where China, Tibet, Russia, India and Afghanistan meet. A kind of melting-pot of a place. A dozen languages are spoken by its half-dozen races. It is unmapped and hardly known—even to its own people."

I told him that I envied his experience and asked him what ever made him go to a place like that.

"I 've been pottering about with archaeology for quite a long time," he said. "Ever since I left school. Going along with exploring parties and doing a little writing. Mostly along the trodden routes—Egypt, Greece, Iraq. I had always wanted to get out into some new territory, and when the war messed up things pretty much all over the place I decided to try Sinkiang. Thought I might track down something.

But I guess it's a better field for paleontology. It was interesting though, and I would most likely still be there now if the war hadn't messed things up in Central Asia too. So I managed to get to America, went back to Kansas—I was born in Wichita, you know—; but there was nothing there for me.

"I met a man in Greece years ago," he continued, "Dr. Karl Saltzburger—did you ever hear of him? He spent quite a bit of time in Yucatán and Guatemala; wrote a fine book, in German. He was Jewish, and the last I heard of him the Germans had finished him off at Buchenwald or Dachau... He told me many interesting things about this country, and so I thought I would come down here for a while."

Someone interrupted our conversation just then, and by the time we could resume it again the party was beginning to break up. In parting Guernsey said that he would look me up in the city; and he did so during the ensuing months. I was somewhat embarrassed at my failure to remember at once who he was, for though I remembered our conversation there was little in his unimpressive appearance which could make him personally memorable.

He was loaded with parcels, and explained that he had been out shopping for supplies. He had moved from Cuernavaca, he said, and was now living out in the country. He had found a quite suitable place, a little hamlet in Guerrero, with archaeological tracings in the vicinity, where he decided to make his quarters. It was a small and primitive hamlet, of a hybrid nomenclature beginning with San something and ending with pec, quite removed from travelled roads, with nothing but a mountain burro trail communicating it with the outside world—just a group of huts sprawling at the edge of a sere stretch of tableland strewn with rocks and infested with scorpions. It was something of an outcast village, he said, the natives being descendants of people who had been driven out of a fertile valley by a hostile tribe. They were a primitive though friendly folk, and they seemed quite pleased that he decided to make his home among them. They helped him build of mud, rock and reed quite the largest and nicest hut in the village, reluctantly accepting the money he gave them. Malaria and amoebic dysentery being endemic in the village, he was taking back an ample supply of quinine, bismuth and other staple drugs, for he had learned during his years in Sinkiang that curing people was the best way of gaining their friendship and confidence.

\* \* \*

Hermits of one type or another are scattered pretty much all over the Mexican hinterlands, and though they always intrigue one's fancy any attempt to comprehend the underlying motives of their strange behavior, because of its inherent contradiction, nearly always verges on a hopeless task. For being the supreme escapists in an ultimate flight from reality, they perversely select an existence wherein they are compelled to confront the starkest form of reality.

I supposed, however, that in Guernsey's specific case the urge to escape stemmed from a loathing of conflict, from an incapacity to live in a world torn by strife and poisoned by hate, a world where the free-

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OIL.

By Doris Rosenkhal.

## Estetla

By Neill James

**E**STETLA was built upon the terraced hillside. The long, low school buildings, church and municipal offices were on different levels, with a few homes among the trees to the right and above. The basketball court between school buildings served as a parade ground for military drill. There was no meson and I occupied a schoolroom.

Estetla was a man's world. Men outnumbered women almost two to one. Mountain women were therefore well treated by their men. Independence Fiesta was six days hence and girls and boys were engaged in preparations, busily cutting paper decorations. When recess bell rang, barefoot boys in long, white cotton trousers and shirts ran for the ball court and played hard until called back to work. The two teachers lived in the school, which also served as community center. There was a little theatre and a spare room with petates for stranded children. A boy of ten, face flushed with malarial fever, lay on a mat on the floor, too ill to walk the four miles home. The law abolishing co-education divided the school into two separate units. The principal undertook the instruction of the 220 boys, while his woman assistant took complete charge of the 180 girls.

The little girls, clad in white cotton blouses and brown homespun skirts, were as alike as peas in a pod. Their tightly braided pigtailed emphasized the basketball roundness of their heads. Their dark copper-colored faces and straight, wide, thick lips and flattened noses bore a definite Mongolian cast. Dain-

ty small hands and feet were Mexican characteristics. They were as shy as wild birds. At the click of my camera, they scattered like a covey of partridges at the sound of a shotgun.

In the days when Christianity was being demonstrated to the aborigines of the New World, a house of worship was as solidly constructed as a small fortress, and served as a haven for the proselyter. Surprisingly, the isolated stone and grass churches at Estetla and Huaxolotipeec were unprotected by walls. A separate torii-like thatched belfry served as ornamental entrance. The shabby exterior was misleading. Within the church was clean and lovingly cared for; saints and holy figures were appropriately dressed. None was neglected. Each morning an Indian woman brought a basket of fresh marigolds and arranged a few before each saint. I was somewhat confused about the religion in this mountain village. Luis declared the Mixtecas only partly Christian. However, Leonard Morales, a bright young Mixtecan who acted as interpreter between students and teachers, *gratia*, said a priest came annually for the fiesta of the Patron Saint.

Paludismo is the curse of Mexico in regions at ported 60 per cent of the community ill with malaria. He asked the Health Department for an adequate supply of quinine. In reply he received the usual annual altitude lower than 6,000 feet. The people of Estetla have always had malaria and assume that nothing can be done about it. In June the principal re-



allotment, 100 pills, enough to cure 5 victims. Estetla was without medical facilities. A doctor had visited there only once during the past four years. There was no nurse. The nearest medical aid was in Oaxaca. Five hundred adults and one hundred children were ill with malaria and there was not a quinine tablet in the community. I had brought my own malaria preventive, but had not enough to share. I learned about malaria from Estetians. Some people suffer with the disease practically all their lives. But they are the tough ones. Untreated children usually die. One bout does not exempt one, even for a season. And it is possible, horrible thought, to suffer three varieties of malaria simultaneously. Annually, five out of every hundred persons in Estetla die of the disease. I was appalled at the passive attitude of the community. I asked the principal what he needed.

"About 12,000 pills for those who are ill now," he replied.

"I don't mean that. What would it require to prevent people from having malaria?"

He made some calculations. "That would be impossible! We'd need a half a million pills a season," he said, placing his pencil over his figures in a hopeless gesture.

Mountain people grow hardy for the simple reason that the weak die young. Like other Mixtecan settlements, the homes of the people, merest shelters with dirt floors, were widely scattered. Their children walked long distances over the mountains, through rain or dew-drenched grass and sat all day in wet clothing. Returning home through the rain, they often slept in damp clothing at night.

Skilled weavers, the women made brown woolen skirts for themselves and daughters, and serapes for their husbands. To card the wool, spin thread, set up a loom and weave a serape required a month's time. Formerly this garment sold in the market for seven pesos. It is now forty pesos.

Estetla had a jail, a single dungeonlike room, with a single prisoner. Local men were embarrassed when I discovered it. The guard grinned and opened the door. The only light entered through a small port-hole in the door and the darkened room contained neither cot, chair nor table. There was nothing to make a man comfortable. To shame the lone prisoner—a drunk and wife-beater in a community where wives were scarce—the culprit was forced to remain trouserless. When I entered, the naked, shivering wretch hid behind the opened door. His untidy bed was a single sheet of paper spread on the concrete floor, chill comfort at an altitude of 6,000 feet.

Infant mortality was high, and so was the death rate among mothers who give birth to their children in floorless, unheated huts with only a witch doctor or unlettered midwife to attend them. The steam bath, so popular throughout Scandinavia and Japan, plays an important part in child birth among the Oaxaca Indians. Indeed, many children are born in the temescal. Eleven days after the birth of her baby, the woman arises and goes to the temescal, where she remains in the steam bath from 8 to 11 hours. There are public temescals and once, for the experience, I actually took a steam bath. I endured the suffocating steam room for half an hour while my companions remained for the entire afternoon. There was no temescal in Estetla. Women used temporary structures covered with leaves. Water sprinkled on hot stones created necessary steam. The temescal has evolved into a ritual, and the Mixtecan indulge in a very pretty custom honoring a young mother during the birth of her first offspring. Young men surround the temescal and play a special music called "Temescal" which pays tribute to the young mother. Neighbors

dance about the bath, usually a temporary structure in front of the cottage. Only the first-born is greeted with such gaiety. Succeeding babies enter the world unheralded.

I gained quite a reputation with Luis as a seeress. Upon seeing a temescal, I'd say, "Luis, I'll wager a peso there's a new baby in that hut. 'When we'd stop there'd be a baby swinging in a net cradle or hammock. He never discovered the temescal was the clue.

Like the Otomies and Chinese, Mixtecan ate but twice daily, early in the morning and again in late afternoon. Frijoles, tortillas, and chili sounds far more poetic than beans, cornbread and pepper, which composed their diet. Meat was rare. In order to keep body and soul together, Mixtecan slave from dawn to dusk. A family usually rises before dawn and the father goes directly to the field while the mother cooks food and brings it to the field, where she breakfasts with her man. Children work as herders and remain in the hills with the animals until nightfall.

Lives of people everywhere on the earth are highlighted by three chief events: They are born, marry and die. Too young to know about his birth, and too old to care about death, a man's wedding remains his happiest fiesta. Usually the poor thing is so frightened at the time that he does not appreciate the felicitous state.

A Mixtecan proposal of marriage is poetic. The prospective groom having privately reached an understanding with his sweetheart, presents himself at the girl's house, kneels, crosses himself in the presence of her parents and formally asks her to marry him. If the family nod assent, the ceremony of "opening the door" takes place the following midnight when they invite the young man to enter and drink chocolate with them. On this occasion the tactful groom presents his prospective in-laws with a suitable present, usually a goat. Two, three, or six months later the wedding takes place.

Families of the young people furnish wedding raiment; the bride's parents give the costume for their future son-in-law, while his family provide the festal dress for the bride. Here the groom wears the traditional white, while the bride arrays herself in the customary tribal costume—a short-sleeved white blouse and ankle-length homespun brown woolen skirt. Instead of a wreath of orange blossoms, the bride wears a skullcap made of half of a dry brown gourd. New huaraches are mandatory.

Brides of other lands wax sentimental over fine silver in candlelight; a Mixtecan maiden prefers a horse. A popular young couple may receive several horses as wedding gifts. When they leave the church after the ceremony two young "flower girls" leading between them a white ewe decorated with ribbons and presents accompany them to their new home. There is never a surplus dwelling in a community, so the home is really new. Neighbors aid the young groom-to-be in building a house. Friends bring presents of food for the wedding feast and pottery vessels for the house. When the newlyweds arrive home music, drinking and feasting are in progress. Two oxen have been slaughtered and barbecued. During the marriage feast a special dance called Sombolilu honors the bride. The two attendants who brought the sheep form crossed hands into a seat, pick up the bride and dance about the hut with her. Two other girls pick up the white ewe, laden with gifts, and in like manner dance about the room with it between them.

Since the State divorced itself from the Church confusion has reigned concerning the marriage cere-

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# Stamping out Illiteracy

By Nathan L. Whetten

**A**LTHOUGH mere "literacy" as such may not indicate very much, widespread "illiteracy" in a modern country may indicate cultural backwardness and may be a serious obstacle to the development of any programs on a national or state level that would require making contacts with the population other than by word of mouth. It is difficult to see how democracy could possibly function effectively on a national level among an illiterate population, since the latter would not be able to ascertain, except through hearsay, the nature of its rights, privileges, and responsibilities under the law. People would be swayed in their thinking by the clever orator rather than by sound analysis of a given program; they would receive only such information regarding issues as politicians chose to tell them. It is difficult to see how such a people could insist upon their rights because they probably would not know what they were.

Judged by the amount of illiteracy that is still prevalent in Mexico, the educational program is far from adequate despite the heroic efforts that have been made. According to the census of 1940, approximately half the total population ten years of age and over (51.6 per cent) could neither read nor write. By regions, the variation was from 38.8 per cent in the north Pacific to 73.8 per cent in the south Pacific. In the four states of Querétaro, Chiapas, Guerrero, and Oaxaca, more than 70 per cent of the population was illiterate in 1940.

The amount of illiteracy varies from one part of the country to another. The variation is indicated according to minor civil divisions for the entire Republic. The northern border states show a much lower proportion of illiteracy in relation to the rest of the country and illiteracy increases as one goes southward. In most of the areas of the southern states of Guerrero, Oaxaca, and Chiapas more than 70 per cent of the population is illiterate. In the Republic as a whole there are 546 municipalities in which the proportion of illiteracy exceeds 70 per cent. These geographic differences in the amount of illiteracy



Drawing.

By Doris Rosenthal.

are closely related to differences in the standards of living of the people, as is evident from a comparison of the illiteracy.

Illiteracy also varies according to the size of the community. In cities of more than 10,000 inhabitants, illiteracy is only 20.6 per cent. In localities with 10,000 inhabitants or less, the percentage is 61.1 while in the municipalities which contain no urban population the percentage is 65.9. These rural-urban differences hold true for nearly every state in the Republic. In almost every case illiteracy is highest in the municipalities which have no urban population and lowest in the cities with more than 10,000 inhabitants.

Finally, illiteracy varies according to age groups. When the inhabitants are classified into three groups according to age, the lowest rate is found in the fifteen-to-nine group, where 48.7 per cent are illiterate. The highest rate is found among the group forty years of age and over. The rate is slightly higher for the ten to fourteen years than for the succeeding age group. This suggests either that some of the children who go to school do not start until they are more than fourteen years of age or that some of those in the age group fifteen to thirty-nine learned to read or write without ever having attended school. Perhaps both assumptions would apply.

Although illiteracy seems high in Mexico at the present time, it is now considerably lower than at any time during Mexico's history. The trend in illiteracy by decades since 1900 is also lower in Mexico at the present time than in many other countries of Latin America. Estimates for some of the other countries are: Argentina, 20 per cent; Uruguay, 20 per cent; Cuba, 22 per cent; Chile 55 per cent; Brazil 65 per cent; Ecuador 75 per cent; Peru, 75 per cent; and Bolivia 75-80 per cent.

In 1944, President Avila Camacho expressed alarm at the high rate of illiteracy that still existed in Mexico. He branded illiteracy as being responsible for many of Mexico's most serious problems, and he initiated a drive to liquidate it. Said he: "Every country has two kinds of enemies—those without and



those within. This latter enemy within Mexico—ignorance—has given rise to grave insufficiencies in our national life—political, economic, and technical evils." He initiated a national campaign against illiteracy by invoking the special wartime emergency powers conferred upon him by the legislature. He issued a decree in the form of a law placing all Mexicans between the ages of eighteen and sixty years who knew how to read and write, and who were not incapacitated, under the obligation of teaching to read and write those persons between the ages of six and forty who were illiterate. Furthermore, the law placed those persons between the ages of six and forty who were illiterate and not attending school under the obligation of accepting the teachings which the law imposed. The campaign was divided into three phases. The first extended to February 28, 1945, and was devoted to organization and to the preparation of teaching materials. The second phase extended for one year from that date and was devoted to the actual teaching. The third phase involved the measuring and the appraisal of results. This was scheduled to end on May 31, 1946. The administration tried to make this a truly national campaign and hoped to reduce illiteracy considerably.

On August 21, 1946, the Secretary of Education, Jaime Torres Bodet, gave a report on the work of the literacy campaign. He reported that a total of 1,440,794 illiterate persons between the ages of six and forty had been reached and that, of these, 708,657 had passed an official examination demonstrating that they learned to read. It was anticipated that many more would pass the examination at a later date. He indicated that the expense of the campaign had amounted to a total of 2,722,535 pesos, or an average of 3.84 pesos for each person passing the examination. The battle against illiteracy was carried on mostly in 69,881 communities. The instructors, for the most part, were schoolteachers who conducted classes after school hours in the afternoons for the youths of the communities who were not attending

Drawing.

By Doris Rosenthal.



school and in the evenings for adults. In some cases laymen, including laborers, farmers and merchants, did the teaching, and the instruction was sometimes carried on in town halls, army barracks, factories, and private homes. The campaign was undertaken seriously, and there is little doubt that illiteracy has been reduced somewhat thereby.

The President of the Republic awarded honorary diplomas to those states and territories wherein illiteracy was reduced more than 10 per cent during the campaign. Diplomas were awarded to nineteen states and territories: Aguascalientes, Baja California Norte, Baja California Sur, Campeche, Coahuila, Colima, Chihuahua, Distrito Federal, Durango, Guanajuato, Hidalgo, Nuevo León, Quintana Roo, San Luis Potosí, Sonora, Tabasco, Tamaulipas, Tlaxcala, and Zacatecas.

Torres Bodet stated that the fight against illiteracy would continue and that examinations would be given later to 732,214 persons who were being taught to read. Furthermore, a school-building program was carried on in connection with the literacy campaign and concerted drives were made to increase school enrolments. According to Torres Bodet, the enrolment in the first grade of the elementary schools in 1946 included 1,238,948 children. This was an increase of 162,788 children, or 15 per cent, over 1942.

Regardless of how successful the campaign against illiteracy may have been, the educational problem will still remain a serious one for years to come. The efforts of the Mexican Government are very commendable. The budget for education was increased from 78,679,674 pesos in 1940 to 207,900,000 pesos in 1946, and 312,000,000 in 1950. This is an increase of 400 per cent in ten years. In 1946 the allotment for education amounted to 17.3 per cent of the entire national budget; in 1950 it amounts to 11 per cent. This is a heroic effort indeed. If we face Mexico's educational problem realistically, however, we must admit that it is still much more serious than the illiteracy figures imply. We must remember that conditions are still such in the communities where most Mexicans live that little or no use can be made of their literacy. The following description of the uses of literacy in the village of Chan Kom in the state of Yucatán is probably characteristic of hundreds of other rural communities in Mexico.

"Most of the people (in Chan Kom) whom the schools have taught to read and write seldom or never do so. In many cases the literacy means an ability to pronounce Spanish words without much understanding of their meaning. Indeed 16 of the persons reported in the census as literate are also described as not knowing how to speak Spanish. As no instruction is given in reading or writing Maya, this means either that these persons do in fact have some knowledge of Spanish or that—and this is the larger share of the truth—their reading knowledge of Spanish is a superficial ability, an accomplishment, not an instrument, of communication.

The actual uses of literacy are so few as to be easily mentioned. The comisario, or some other literate man, reads the official communications occasionally sent to the village by the national or the state government, by the Liga (a labor organization) or by the agrarian commission. One or two men are able to compose replies without the aid of the teacher. Two kinds of books exist and are consulted. One is the church calendar; to this recourse is had when a name is sought for a new-born infant. The other is the booklet of Catholic prayers, in print or in manuscript ... There is one man (and probably no other) who

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Linoleum engraving.

By Leopoldo Méndez

# Leopoldo Méndez

By Guillermo Rivas

**I**F WE accept the premise that art has its two basic functions—i.e., the primary function of serving as the means of an artist's expression, and the secondary function of arousing an emotional response in the spectator, we must measure the extent of success achieved by an artist by the extent his art fulfills these two functions.

Following this criterion we discover, however, that not many artists achieve such complete success. We find that usually the successful achievement of the primary function denotes a failure in the secondary, or vice versa. An artist, in other words, who can fully and honestly express himself in his art and at the same time achieve an art which encounters an authentically popular response is a rare occurrence.

Among our outstanding contemporary artists, in my opinion, Leopoldo Méndez represents such rare achievement more completely than almost anyone I can think of. This can be ascribed to the fact that Méndez is by nature an authentic popular artist: that is to say, his own quite personal voice directly echoes the voice of the popular rank and file. In classing him thus, I do not of course infer that his work appeals to vulgar taste. What I infer is that the aesthetic values and the moral substance of his work answer an authentically popular need.

His identification with such popular need was a quite normal result of his origin, for Méndez, born in this city 47 years ago, stems from an humble work-

ing-class midst. And what lends his work such singular sincerity and imbues it with power is the fact that he has never endeavored to abandon this midst. It is the unbroken loyalty to his origin that saved him from the pitfalls of negative sophistication, that has preserved his creative integrity and made of his personality a perfect fusion of the man and artist.

It is not entirely because of ideological motives, but more truly because he sensed that the value of his art must be determined by its popularity—which, on the other hand, could not be attained painting pictures intended for ornamental frames and affluent parlours—that from the very outset he remained indifferent to brushes and paints, confining himself entirely to black and white mediums.

Impelled from childhood by a poet's urge for articulation, Leopoldo Méndez found an unimpeded outlet by mastering the intricacies of his tools and mediums to a degree of perfection which gave him a place of preeminence (He was awarded the first premium for engraving at the National Exhibition of Art in 1946). Aided by this technical dexterity, his utterance, invariably significant in theme, even when it involves the most subtle lyrical terms, is incisive and clear. His statement is literally black on white.

At an earlier period, his youthful venturesomeness revealed itself in complex compositions of multiple patterns imaginatively woven about a focal





Linoleum engraving.  
By Leopoldo Mendez



Linoleum engraving.  
By Leopoldo Mendez



Linoleum engraving.  
By Leopoldo Mendez

Linoleum engraving.  
By Leopoldo Mendez



Linoleum engraving.  
By Leopoldo Mendez

Linoleum engraving.  
By Leopoldo Mendez

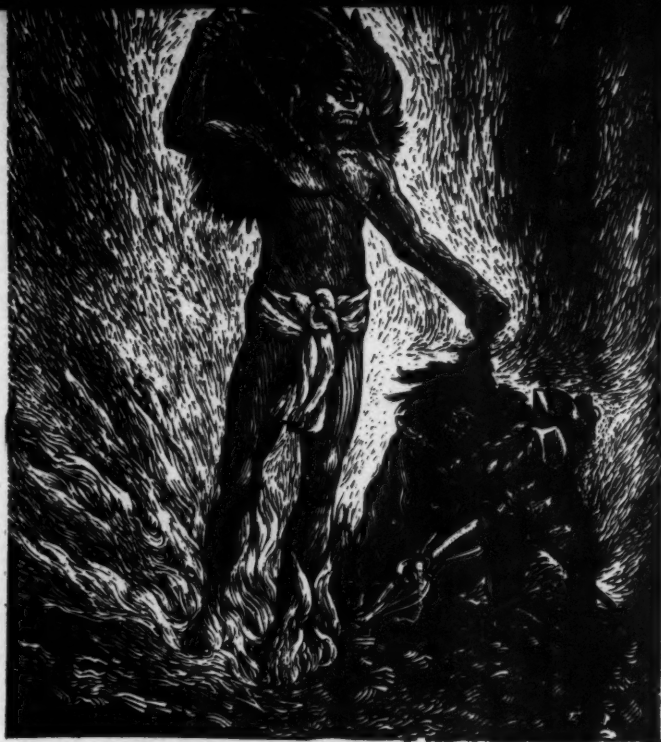




theme, wherein the subjective rather than the objective element was preponderant. At times, a distortion of line verging on caricature lent deeper mordancy to his social satire. With the passing of years his composition has acquired grater simplicity. Its subjective substance is now more subtly defined: the focal theme is less obscured by the interplay of secondary themes. His viewpoint, unchanged in substance, has assumed a mature mellowness; his idiom a more outspoken quality.

Directly or indirectly all veritable art is a factor of enlightenment; but in the career of Leopoldo Mendez art and education have been indeed synonymous. His engravings have illustrated many books and periodicals and have been reproduced in countless posters. A painstaking craftsman, deeply conscientious in every thing he does, he has created prolifically during twenty-five years, yet giving most of his time to the actual task of teaching art in local government schools.

Thus, as artist-teacher, Leopoldo Mendez has achieved the rare distinction of a complete creative expression, of producing an art which fully materializes its two basic functions.



Linoleum engraving.

By Leopoldo Mendez



Linoleum engraving.

By Leopoldo Mendez



Linoleum engraving.  
By Leopoldo Mendez

# Un Poco de Todo

## CONFERENCE AT RIO

A shortage of dollars and a shortage of good Government still characterize the South American scene as Assistant Secretary of State Edward G. Miller Jr., George F. Kennan, the State Department's policy expert, and the United States Ambassadors to ten republics of the area begin a regional conference this month in Rio de Janeiro.

The dollar shortage applies in varying degrees to all the countries except oil-endowed Venezuela. The timeless Latin-American curse of non-democratic Government is for the moment less general—although it certainly afflicts at least three and probably four of the nations of the region.

It may or may not be significant that Venezuela, the country with the most dollars, now has the least claim to political democracy. The military junta that took over in Caracas in November, 1948, has thus far not even set a date for the next election.

The general economic situation in Good Neighbor countries is still suffering from the post-war let-down, although there has been some improvement. For one thing, whereas in 1948 only four South American countries had favorable trade balances with the United States, last year there were five—Brazil joining Bolivia, Chile, Colombia and Uruguay.

This is a good sign, but incomplete as a test. For example, Argentina, where the dollar shortage is severe, will always be better fed, housed and clothed than Bolivia. The Andean fastness around La Paz produce tin, which brings in slightly more dollars than Bolivia has been spending. But the basic economy of Bolivia is doomed by her fantastic geography; for a country without transport and with limited food resources, progress and prosperity on a nation-wide basis are a matter of centuries rather than years.

This fundamental handicap of nature applies one way or another to at least half the South American republics. Compounded with the human factors of poverty, ignorance and disease, it stands as a challenge that no regional meeting of United States diplomats can hope to answer.

What Mr. Miller and his associates are looking for are new or improved approaches. On political lines, for instance, it is already apparent that Washington's thinking on the Communist problem in this area has altered considerably since the Bogota conference of April, 1948.

At Bogota, according to the private opinion of one of our best-informed statesmen, we succeeded in pushing the so-called anti-Communist resolution down the throats of the other delegations. The men in charge of Latin-American relations in Washington, according to one of them, now incline more to the belief that communism of the Stalinist variety does not constitute a threat except for areas within easy reach of the Soviet Army. And, moreover, they tend to believe that for reasons of education, religion and social orientation, the distance between Moscow and the operational area of a Paraguayan Guarani is for practical purposes bridgeless.

Thus, while the United States diplomatic conferences in Rio de Janeiro devote themselves to what Secretary of State Dean Acheson has called "waging peace in the Americas," they are unlikely to take a further positive stand on communism. The Commu-

nist problem in this hemisphere will continue to be handled on the security and intelligence level. More blocs, pacts and fronts seem to be out.

And in general, economics will be discussed more than politics. Thus more is likely to be said at Rio de Janeiro about the effect of the drought on Argentina's crops than about the effect of President Juan Perón's press policy. The latter will be mentioned—and so will the subtle friction between Argentina and Uruguay.

But in terms of the broad economic problems, several types of solution will be discussed at Rio. All tend toward raising South American living standards. But probably a primary course will be the stimulation of private investment rather than mere reliance on Government assistance in form of Marshall Plan purchases of Latin American products or Export-Import Bank loans.

There is an estimated \$16 billion of United States venture capital that might conceivably go into developments in this region. One idea projected for discussion at Rio de Janeiro is that of making the various republics aware of what even a small portion of this sum might mean to their individual economies.

Mr. Miller in a Chicago speech recently listed seven points that would tend to attract this capital. He included existence of stable, representative and democratic institutions of government, equality of treatment for foreigners, opportunity for free transfer of earnings and fair taxes.

The recent treaty of friendship, commerce and economic development between the United States and Uruguay is being held up as a model that other Latin American nations might consider. Washington would like more such accords, but must avoid the appearance of seeking to impose them.

Meanwhile, with Washington aware that increased exports would be insufficient to close the dollar gap, an even more direct approach is being made by the two-man mission of George Wythe, chief of the American republics division of the Commerce Department in Washington, and Francisco Hernandez of the Organization of American States.

The job of the mission is to convince the Governments that petty restrictions and red tape against tourists tend to choke off the flow of dollars in "invisible exports."

From 1931 to 1940, South America got 2.5 per cent of the world dollar travel outlay. The estimate for 1948-49 was 8 per cent. The United States diplomats at Rio will seek to recommend means to get it up to possible 14 per cent—still barely a third of what Mexico and the Caribbean area already are getting.

Since the United States travel spending potential is estimated at \$2 billion annually, 14 per cent would mean \$280,000,000 for South America.

Rio de Janeiro is not as touchily located in the world scene as Bangkok where the Southeast Asian regional meeting of United States diplomats recently took place, and no major change of policy will emerge in the Brazilian city. But the new or amended approaches that the conferences is likely to yield are being awaited with great curiosity from Caracas to Buenos Aires.



# Literary Appraisals

**MEXICO: The Struggle for Peace and Bread.** By Frank Tannenbaum. 293 pp New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

**F**RANK TANNENBAUM, Professor of Latin American History at Columbia University, knows Mexico as few people do and better than most "old Mexico hands." In a sense, although he lives elsewhere, he is an old Mexico hand himself, for he has been following its peasant and labor story for years, the hard way, from the snarls of statistics to the jouncing trails. Moreover, having approached the problems that interest him more with warm personal concern than with mere academic curiosity, he became exceptional: an American who enjoys the confidence of many of Mexico's policy-makers and leaders, and the close friendship of even the people's sphinx, Gen. Lázaro Cárdenas, President from 1934 to 1940.

In "Mexico: The Struggle for Peace and Bread," Dr. Tannenbaum surveys thirty-six years of conflict and change, from the outbreak of the revolution of 1910 to the end of 1946. He includes background chapters on the country's economic geography and general history, as well as a realistic and illuminating account of its land problem; and concludes with a chapter on U. S.-Mexico relations.

The book is written as a series of analyses. Some readers may find in it a number of puzzles and contradictions, which are inevitable if history is seen in terms of moral goals and individual consciences, rather than as a working of political processes. For example the author, recounting great things done in a picture of what certainly looks like progress, is much worried by but cannot, as a moral man, answer the question that socially-minded visitors to Mexico always ask first; "How, with revolutionaries become tycoons and talk of graft so commonplace, is it possible for Mexico to progress in terms of the little man's need?" But, tycoons push material progress at least in order to have peace and markets, and things are done for the little man by the unmoral as well as by the moral man in politics, in order to remain in power.

Mr. Tannenbaum's story of the 1910 revolution and of the Independence movement a hundred years before, omits key pieces from the jigsaw. These upheavals, as he relates them, "just happened," suddenly and explosively like new volcanoes. But the National Archives are full of documents relating to uprisings, plots and tumults which weaken the view that the Independence "blew up" after three centuries of somnolence. Similarly, the revolution of 1910 was anteceded by thwarted uprisings, strikes, and widespread underground movements, part Jacobin, part Socialist, whose leaders and heirs wrote into the 1917 Constitution the radical legislation Dr. Tannenbaum says is hard to explain without a large labor organization on the scene.

The safe and desirable road to national salvation, Dr. Tannenbaum argues, is the "alternative" strengthening of the small community. He does not, in his sincere alarm, take account of recent developments in that direction: the remarkable crop increase initiated by the introduction of new seed strains and better methods, and the TVA-like project in the huge Papaloapan River Basin.

In fact, the whole book is colored by the author's view that the welfare of Mexico depends primarily on what happens to the corn-roots man, who is in the majority. The peasant has lost position of recent years

as the favorite child in Mexican politics, and perhaps for that reason, Dr. Tannenbaum is not cheerful about the country's future. His picture of the condition and prospects of agriculture is bleak; and he has no faith in the "salvation-through-industrialization" doctrine of the present regime. Mexico hasn't the capital for large-scale government planning and participation in industry, he says, and he doubts very much whether enough money is being accumulated fast enough to prevent impoverishing the population for the sake of a big, unsound, and unachievable dream. That is, indeed, a danger; the Diaz government died in that blind alley.

A. B.

**BRAZILIAN CULTURE** By Fernando de Azevedo. Translated by William Rex Crawford. 418 photographs. 562 pp. New York: The Macmillan Company.

**H**HE story of the people of Brazil is part of the saga of American settlement which holds such fascination for other Americans. The settlers started to come from Portugal in the early years of the sixteenth century, and their scanty numbers were reinforced by Negroes brought as slaves from Africa. Their first work was to cut the red brazilwood which grew along the beach and take it back to Lisbon. (The country was named after the wood, valuable since medieval times as a source of scarlet dye.)

Sugar cane, brought from Madeira, was found to grow tumultuously in the virgin soil, and for two hundred years the Portuguese crown, through conquistadors turned slave-holding colonists, held control of the world's sugar markets. Cattle were brought to roam the backlands, mining followed as gold and diamonds rolled out under explorers' picks. Coffee dominated the national economy in a later stage.

It is to the culture of this bulky land that Dr. Azevedo, a prominent Brazilian educator and sociologist, addresses his major attention. Culture is to him what it was to Humboldt—"that moral, intellectual and artistic state in which men have managed to rise above simple considerations of social utility and have achieved the disinterested study of the sciences and arts." The author rejects the wider definition favored by such modern anthropologists as Clark Wissler and Margaret Mead. He examines Brazil's religious institutions and beliefs, its literary and intellectual life, its scientific and artistic development, but he gives most of his attention to education, which he believes to be the main channel by which culture is transmitted.

The book is verbose and repetitious, meant to be consulted in part rather than to be used as a whole, yet there are orchids in this jungle. Dr. Azevedo examines at length the cost of that policy of isolation and unitary education which was imposed on the colonies by Portuguese rule and Jesuit teaching. Slaves and convicts were landed by royal order, but the free air of European inquiry was not allowed to seep by the harbor entrances. While ships of Portugal's allies could seek shelter in the ports, neither crews nor passengers were allowed to land, nor was there any trading with other ports than Lisbon. Throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth and most of the eighteenth centuries an iron curtain hung about one of the globe's loveliest and most fertile regions.

A competent translation would have helped the book, and a strong blue pencil could have hacked straight paths through meandering repetitions. Nevertheless, patient readers equipped with a skill in skipping can gain from it and its ample bibliography a real insight into certain phases of Brazilian civilization. The impatient ones will admire the 418 illustrations which make this book a handsome and expensive product.

M. A.

**COLONIAL ARCHITECTURE AND SCULPTURE IN PERU.** by Harold E. Wethey. 330 pp. Illustrated. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

THE history of colonial art in Peru is magnificently spanned by this work, a nicely balanced opus of erudition and enthusiasm. It is here, for the first time, that one can grasp the sweep of the Spanish colonial achievement in Peru, for out of their conquest, forged with blood and iron, the Spaniards built, with the aid of legions of Indians (many of whom were its architects), a concourse of churches, which for sheer opulence of decoration and nascent dignity have only a few rivals on this continent. How many and how varied were these buildings can only be grasped by studying the 366 impressive illustrations which enliven this book.

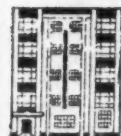
In Cuzco, the heart of the Inca empire, the Spaniards built their own edifices on the very foundations

of Incaic ruins. Here Indians learned art forms that they had never before known. They learned the use of the T-square and the compass, and from designs furnished them raised up towering cathedrals which are marvels of design and adaptation. In the intricate carved pulpits and the interior retables there was a blending of Spanish and Inca elements, a distinct iconography that is "the Cuzco school."

It was on the shores of heaven-high Lake Titicaca, in the late sixteenth century, that the priests built their City of God. There mestizo art, "the hybrid fruit of Indian tradition and Hispanic culture," had its finest expression. From Arequipa (at Peru's southern border), filled with churches carved from volcanic ash, to Lima's overpowering sophistry of golden opulence, Dr. Wethey has sought the details of the life history of these monuments.

They are now no longer anonymous and communal. Despite the fact that there is a wealth of detail here, of notes and bibliography and, as is to be expected in a scholarly work, a technical discussion of architectural forms, there is also present a contagious enthusiasm for the subject. When Dr. Wethey admires a structure, he says so with a lyrical simplicity not often found in studies like this.

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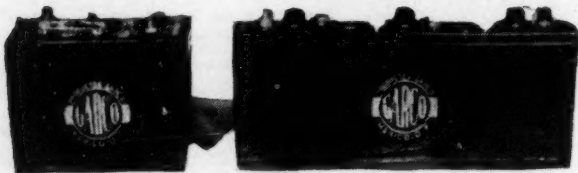
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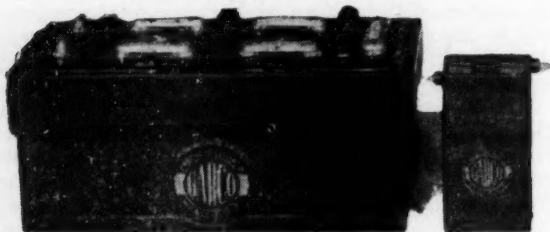




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This book will come as a surprise to those nurtured on the pap of the "black legend" that transformed the Spanish in America into monsters. For in Peru, Indians were trained to be architects and artists, and an attempt was made to blend the discordant cultures—Indian and Christian—into a harmonious balance in society, in art, in life. Although the trajectory was high, and the mark was overshot, still the fruits of this attempt at cultural union are impressive, as seen in this first, full treatment of the subject.

As any student of the era knows only too well, the story of colonial art in Peru had been a cultural hiatus for centuries. The facts and the interpretations which Dr. Wethey has so judiciously assembled will go a long way toward filling that gap. His book will have its influence—and, it is hoped, its emulators.

V. W. V. H.

**LORCA: THE POET AND HIS PEOPLE.** By Arturo Barca. 176 pp. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co.

LORCA is now the universal Andalusian who shares the attention of highbrow Americans with two other Andalusians, Picasso and Manuel de Falla. People believe that Lorca appeared in Spanish life like a meteor, exciting surprise and admiration from the very first. Such is not the case. He also knew indifference and opposition—and after his death he must have known something worse—the Philistine following. This is one of the dangers of becoming fashionable.

As we all know a poet does not need to be understood to be loved. It is enough if his images are incorporated into the common repertory on that plane of ineffable emotion where reason does not necessarily have to enter. Such was Lorca's rising popularity, which neither came early nor was unanimous. And the nucleus of that popularity was more in the intelligent influence of the cultured minority than in the spontaneous disposition of the people. But an interesting phenomenon in Lorca's life is that facility with

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which his work passed beyond the limits of the minority—the immense minority—and began spreading among the people.

In 1936 Lorca was the most distinguished poet in Spain and he was beginning to be the most popular. Yet Lorca never did anything to force popularity. In his work he neither cajoled those opposed to tradition nor tradition in its debated privileges.

Barea tells us about the confusion of two workers who tried to find some form of social protest in Lorca's verses. There is none in all his work except in the measure in which originality can be a protest against established forms. Nor did the conservatives find that originality to their liking. From them came the Falangista group that assassinated the poet in 1936.

Lorca was not a subversive poet nor a traditional poet. His equations were created with elements whose combinations were useful only to him. The themes of love and death and their troubling ambivalences occupy all his stage and particularly that of his most ambitious poem, "Lament and Death of a Bull Fighter." A grandiose stage, Barea analyzes the poet's popularity and his originality, making them interdependent and reminding us of the secret ties that keep them bound to what is most genuinely Spanish and Andalusian.

But Lorca's popularity continues to be an enigma for some. There are those who explain it by finding in Lorca a tendency to popular flattery in the use of themes common to "flamenco" songs. Some even dare to accuse him of folklorism and coloristic facility. It is the same accusation made of Manuel de Falla by Stravinsky in the world of music. It is not a serious objection, because if folklore can fall into a sterile empiricism the fact of popular imagery continues intact and fecund beyond all formulas, and will continue to be the source of wretched poetry with mediocre poets and sublime poetry with poets of genius. There is nothing in Lorca representing a burden of already established forms.



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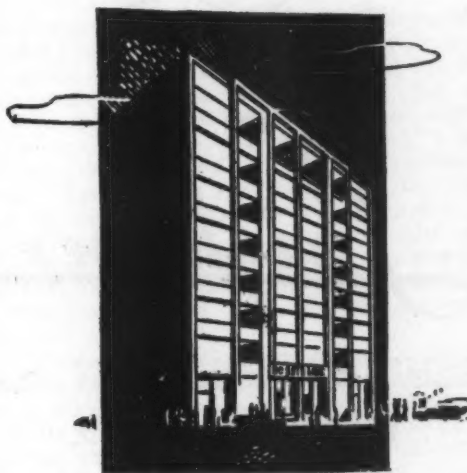
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Lorca dreamed of his gypsies, but those gypsies are not the ones found in popular prints. They are his alone and they are full of the heritage of cultures much older than the gypsies. Near Lorca's town twenty centuries ago Seneca and Lucan were born. Lorca's allusions to that heritage are frequent.

For Lorca, integrated in the old Mediterranean and oriental culture, it was enough to reveal the sumptuous world of his unconscious to be conciliated with the people on the plane of an unwritten tradition parallel to the other, the cultured tradition. The Romanized gypsy is Andalusia. But Lorca's folklorism was rather "folklorquism." The fact that Lorca took from the lyric poetry of Lope de Vega some displacements of accents as Lope had taken them from medieval songs is, on the other hand, only an act of literary sympathy which has nothing to do with the tricks of colorism. It is not in folklore or color that one finds the reasons for Lorca's popularity.

Barea's book clarifies the more accessible zones in the problem of the social personality of the poet and it shows us the roots of his popularity. The chapters "The Poet and Sex," "The Poet and Death" and "The Poet and His Art" have a luminosity that surpasses the literary analysis. With the purpose of showing Lorca integrated in the Spanish character Barea makes a suggestive differentiation of the elements making up that character, independently of the poet.

I am sure that these pages will be to the liking of American readers, whether they know Lorca or not. The book offers bilingual examples of all the stages of the poet's production that quicken nostalgia in us Spaniards, and in Americans will doubtless awaken zones of sensibility undiscovered or unknown to themselves. This task is the privilege of poetry. And when the poet has a lyrical nature endowed with this exceptional communicative aptitude, which is the mark of genius, his popularity offers no great problems.

R. S.



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# Legitimate Drama and the Wrecker's Pick

By Vane C. Dalton

**D**URING the course of several weeks the pedestrians along Calle Bolivar were probably somewhat molested by the clouds of dust that rose from the wreckage of an old structure that was being demolished. Though I seriously doubt if many among them actually took note of the fact that the building assailed by the wreckers was none other than the venerable Teatro Principal, the oldest theatrical structure in Mexico, and probably in the entire hemisphere.

At any rate, the wreckers did a fairly speedy job of it, and now the space it occupied during almost two hundred years is helping to relieve the acute traffic congestion in that part of the town by serving as a parking lot for automobiles.

It is easy to explain the busy pedestrian's indifference in this case, for demolitions of old buildings is a quite common occurrence in the central streets, and besides, having been utilized as a cheap, second-run movie house throughout its final eighteen years, the Teatro Principal became quite inconspicuous and somewhat bedraggled, hardly suggesting its bygone splendor or historical significance. It did, however, seem a bit odd to this writer that the passing of this ancient playhouse aroused so little attention in the columns of our press, because the long and eventful history of the Teatro Principal essentially comprises the history of the Mexican theatre during the past two centuries.

It was on Christmas day in 1753 that the Teatro Principal, or El Nuevo Coliseo, as it was originally

called, raised its curtain for the first time, presenting before a brilliant gathering a comedy by an unknown author, appropriately titled, "Mejor está que estaba" — "It is better now than it was before." The title alluded to the old Coliseo which had been condemned by the government and dismantled several years prior. The new Coliseo was built of stone and in such sturdy manner that its walls and facade retained their original aspects to the day they were torn down. As a matter of fact, except for occasional new coats of paint, very little had been done in the way of interior change throughout its entire lengthy career up to the first day of March, 1931, when it was gutted by a disastrous fire.

During its first ninety years, or up to 1844, when President Santa-Anna inaugurated the sumptuous edifice of the Teatro Nacional, the Teatro Principal was truly the principal playhouse in the city, its regular offerings including everything from traditional religious plays to Spanish zarzuelas and Italian opera. Its stage provided the setting for practically every significant event in the Mexican theatre.

Even after the Teatro Nacional assumed its due primacy, the Principal retained an undiminished popularity as a purveyor of lighter entertainment. Surviving earthquakes and plagues, wars and famine, throughout six generations this theatre preserved its place of indisputable prominence. Through all these many years the Capital's night life centered about the gay tandas of the Principal. To be sure, we can still

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recall the merry evenings we spent there some twenty years ago, when Maria Conesa was in her prime.

It was during a temporada of Roberto Soto's revues that the theatre burnt down, the fire entailing a loss of several lives and of the portly comico's fortune. But since its massive walls were left intact, and probably because the theatrical business was even then running into hard times, it was rebuilt for a movie house. Evidently, however, its reduced seating capacity and other handicaps have rendered it obsolete and unprofitable even for this purpose, so now, at least provisionally, the historical ground it stood on is earning its keep as a parking lot.

**TEATRO VIRGINIA FABREGAS**

With the dust of the demolished Principal barely settled in Calle Bolivar, word comes to us that the wrecker's pick will soon commence tearing down another venerable playhouse, the Teatro Virginia Fábregas, in Calle Donceles. Bearing the name of the most distinguished actress on the Mexican stage, who during the last fifty years has probably done more than any other person in our knowledge to keep alive the art of legitimate drama in our midst, this playhouse however, will be rebuilt once the wrecking job is finished.

Originally Doña Virginia's property, the old edifice, whose walls seem even now to echo the voices of Mexico's most illustrious stage artists of the past, was acquired some years ago by Sr. Ricardo Toledo,



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a wealthy real estate operator who is also a staunch devotee of dramatic art. Despite the adverse situation which has prevailed in the theatrical business for years, Sr. Toledo has faith in its future. Having acquired the adjoining property, he intends to spend several million pesos on the construction of a new playhouse, which will preserve the original name of "Fabregas." It will be considerably larger than the old theatre and will provide all modern facilities.

The intrepid Sr. Toledo is undertaking this project in the firm belief that there is still a place in this bustling city of nearly three million souls for at least one playhouse specifically designed for the presentation of legitimate drama. And in this belief he might not be entirely wrong. For while the decline of the legitimate stage in our midst, much as elsewhere, has been mainly due to the fact that it has been supplanted by the cinema, it cannot be denied that the lack of adequate playhouses has played a quite important part in this decline.

It may be argued, of course, that good art can be created in any surroundings, that a converted cow-barn can, of need be, serve the purpose of dramatic art; and there might be indeed a measure of truth in such argument. But to say that a successful theatrical enterprise can be conducted to day in such totally unsuitable and wibegone quarters as those this city still has at its disposal—the Teatro Arheu, or the Ideal, or even the old Fábregas, which is the best of the lot—is sheer nonsense. If the legitimate stage is ever to be revived in this city, the revival will have to be complete. It will have to depart from outworn traditions, forget the horse-and-buggy school of acting and catch-penny billboards. But above all, it will have to begin upon dignified premises. The public that can support a legitimate theatre has grown accustomed to the comfort and luxury provided by the movie palaces and is repelled by the antiquity and depressing dinginess of some such place as the Teatro Arheu.

So let us hope that in providing this city with at least one suitable playhouse Sr. Toledo might pave the way to a new beginning on our dramatic stage. Here too, it may be argued that one cannot become a horseman by merely buying a pair of riding boots. But, obviously, a beginning must be made somewhere, and a nice new theatre building might turn out to be it.



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## Art and Personal Notes

**T**HE excellent painting reproduced last month on the cover of this magazine is by Edith Hoyt, a distinguished American artist who has been working in Mexico, during recent months. Presenting her impression of a colorful street in the town of Erongaricuaró, on Lake Patzeuaro in Michoacán, this canvas is included in this artist's local exhibit held this month at the International Woman's Club.

**T**HE GALERIA de Arte Moderno (Calle del Milan No. 18), conducted by Inés Amor, resumed its activities on the 7th of this month, offering in a joint exhibit paintings and drawings by the English artist Henry Moore and sculpture by Luis Ortiz Monasterio. Enlarged and thoroughly modernized, this gallery, the oldest of its kind in the city, will present in the future permanent exhibits of works by our outstanding talents and at least one special exhibit each month.

**A** LARGE collection of landscapes in water color by General Ignacio M. Beteta is to be shown during the second fortnight of this month at the Salon de la Plástica Mexicana (Calle de Puebla No. 154). A high officer in the Mexican Army and Chief of the Department of Military Industries, General Beteta has been devoting his spare time to painting throughout a number of years. Combining a fine feeling for color with a quite personal style and a technical ability which could be envied by many professional painters, General Beteta recreates the Mexican landscape with an arresting spontaneous freshness.

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Although we were privileged to reproduce one of his paintings on the cover of our last December issue, which served, so to speak, as an initial introduction, this is General Beteta's first public exhibit.

**T**HE CLARDECOR GALLERY (Paseo de la Reforma and Havre) is offering, at this time a very interesting group of paintings and drawings by Leonore Carrington, an English painter who has been making her home in Mexico during several years. Fantasy expressed in realistic terms might be a description of this gifted painter's work.

**O**ILS, temperas and engravings by Fernando Castro Pacheco, comprised last month's exhibit at the Salon de la Plastica Mexicana. A native of Yucatán, Castro Pacheco is especially expressive in his powerfully constructed depictions of the Maya folk and regions.

**C**IRCULO DE BELLAS ARTES (Avenida Juarez No. 58) offered last month a voluminous exhibit of landscapes in oil by Boris Antipovich. Born in Russia, where he received his early art training, and an electrical engineer by profession, this artist has been residing in Mexico during more than twenty years. This was his initial public exhibit.

**F**OLLOWING this exhibit the Circulo de Bellas Artes presented a collection of drawings by Joaquín Gonzalez, covering a wide range of themes. An adroit draftsman, Gonzalez achieves his most successful work in portraiture, where convincing likeness is relieved by traces of caricature.

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**D**URING the first fortnight of the current month this gallery will present a group of paintings in oil by the Spanish artist José Luis Pasajes, which includes portraits, genre scenes and landscapes of Mexico and Spain.

**D**RAWINGS and paintings by the American artist Eugene H. Mackaben may be seen in the course of this month at the Exhibition Salon of the Esmeralda School of Painting and Sculpture (Calle Esmeralda No. 14).

**T**HE BIBLIOTECA NACIONAL (Corner Uruguay and Is. la Católica) is currently showing a group of paintings by Leonor Elorday. Inspired by native themes, and somewhat traditional in general character, the work of this painter stands out for its sensitive palette.

**A** types were first reproduced in our pages twenty SARIO, whose pastel character studies of native

and some odd years ago, has recently returned to Mexico after a long residence in New York. An exhibit of this gifted artist's work will be given at one of our galleries in the forthcoming months.

### Patterns of an Old City . . .

Continued from page 22

dom of individual will ceased to exist, where every man was forced to surrender his will to the mandate of others, where human destiny assumed the spectral image of a bloody nightmare. He was seeking absolute peace—complete isolation, a means of survival in a world bent on self-destruction.

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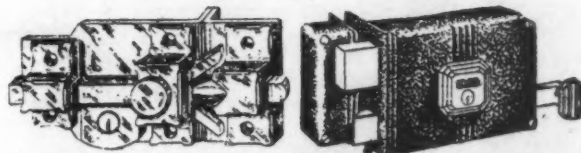


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and buried, seems more perfect than the present. Because of their absolute detachment, their halcyon existence in a vanished world, their ghoulish delight at digging up some meaningful piece of rock or chunk of pottery, or at being able to decipher a glyphic curlicue, I have always regarded archaeologists as a singularly happy class of beings.

And yet I never felt quite sure that Guernsey could be included in that fortunate class. His personal dilemma, the way it seemed to me, could be traced to the fact that his scientific pursuit had never vouchsafed full detachment. His individualism had never reached the supreme assertion of a complete escape. His mind, absorbed in its explorations of the past, was still inseparably bound to the present. Fleeing from it, he was yet unable to escape its brunt. He was burdened with a gnawing sense of personal guilt for the world's tragic plight: he could not work out a satisfactory code of personal conduct that could completely remove him from the shattered ethos of his time. His physical severance did not entirely free him from the moral devastation that assailed humanity at large.

All this I gathered from his own scattered remarks throughout the years of our desultory association which was restricted to his occasional visits in the city (these visits, I noted, were never in the nature of recreation; they were not prompted by a desire for a periodical return to civilization but by the need to replenish his supplies. He did not seem, moreover, to feel at ease in the city and usually left as soon as his shopping was done). I particularly remember a comment he made referring to the war and the Germans. It ran more or less as follows:

"I was still at college during the first one; so the draft board let me off. And now I am past age for this one. So that leaves me out. But there is this other thing, which hardly leaves any of us out. It's what they have done—the Germans, I mean. As hard as we might try to make ourselves believe that they are apart from the rest of us, that in some way they are not quite human, that they are a nation of incorrigible delinquents, that they are sub-human, that they are a degenerate breed of the species, we cannot escape the fact that they too belong to the human race. So it's this feeling of common responsibility, this feeling of burning shame that human beings can actually descend so low, from which we cannot extricate ourselves... That's why each of us, in some manner or other, is trying to hide this shame."

\* \* \*

We fall into the habit of indexing people, especially if their character reveals some oddity, by way of such facile designations as "sublimation urge," or "guilt-complex," or "masochist compulsion," and at first I was probably inclined to draw on this convenient lexicon in Guernsey's case. But my further association with him gradually made me forego such handy simplification. He revealed facets that did not quite fit in the index.

For one thing I gathered that he was fully contented with the strenuous life he had chosen. This, as he had explained to me, was due to the fact that he had quite successfully adjusted himself to his strange surroundings. The village was truly his home and its people his neighbors and friends. He took a sincere interest in their welfare; sought to help them by counsel and deed, took part in their festivities and shared in their sorrows. From what he had told me I surmised that he had something of a missionary's zeal, for which the village provided a propitious outlet. He not only healed the ailing, but being appa-



rently equipped with a knowledge in varied fields also helped the men with their crops—showed them how to exterminate ants and combat other plagues, how to rotate their meager plantings and store up rain water for irrigation. With his scant knowledge of Spanish he even ventured to conduct a sort of school where he taught both children and adults to read and write. All these tasks, it seems, took up more of his time than his archaeological provings.

I found his rare visits extremely stimulating; and yet there was something mildly disturbing about his person, probably because people of his kind, by their suggestion of saintliness arouse in us an awareness of our own deficiencies.

For a time it looked as if he had actually found his perfect refuge, his microcosmic retreat, in the remote Guerrero village. The pains of a blundering world seemed only slightly to burden his heart. It was too deeply, too vitally absorbed in the tiny isolated world which he had discovered and largely created for his own utility and pleasure. Guernsey, I perceived, actually assumed the prerogatives of undisputed leadership, of a tribal chieftain, the role of a casique, of a benevolent alien conqueror, accepted and venerated by the folk he conquered.

And then, at the end of several years, throughout which I came to regard his anomalous solution, his achievement of rationalizing a quite irrational solution, as admirable and unique, I began to perceive a gradual change in his demeanor—a trace of weariness and uncertainty which he seemed to be striving to disguise in an affected assurance and boldness. A suggestion of challenge crept into his speech. A strange belligerence lurked beneath his diffident manner.

It was during one of his final visits, while we were having lunch in a quiet sidestreet restaurant, that he told me about his new problems, some unforeseen difficulties that had developed in the village. He was unable to trace the origin of the trouble, though he thought that it had probably started with the local curandera who, it seemed, had always deeply resented his usurpation of her acknowledged position as healer. Then it might have been also due to the circuit dominie who despite his outward amiability probably harbored suspicions that he was secretly engaged in Protestant proselyting, and, finally, when the drouth that year had destroyed the crops some of the villagers assumed an attitude of blaming him for it. He found himself now, after several years of friendliness and accepted authority, in the midst of suspicion, of disguised or open hostility.

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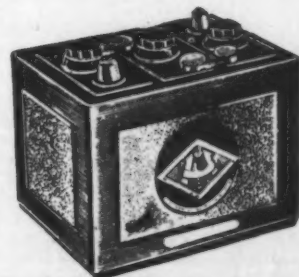
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MEN'S WEAR

It was all nonsense, of course, he assured me, and he was determined to make them realize that they were wrong. I was startled to note that his fist mildly pounded the table when he said this, and I expressed the hope that everything would be straightened out with time. "Oh, that's all right," he said. "I've got a fight on my hands, and I am not going to give up. They'll see something before I am through." A tiny fire blazed up in his faded eyes.

It was disconcerting to perceive Guernsey in this new role—to behold this strange man who had gone to the end of the world in pursuit of peace, involved in a war of his own.

And yet, beyond my grief, I was hardly surprised to hear a few months later that he was dead, as result either of murder or suicide—a detail which had never been fully ascertained by the rural authorities—; though it did seem to me hardly plausible that a man could take his life by a self-inflicted knife-wound in the abdomen.

## Through the Gales . . .

Continued from page 17

"Now I know we're out of Mareño country." The evidence pointed to a village somewhere near-by where the natives had contact with civilization. We hurried on to find it before dark.

As we sailed down the channel looking for the village we continued fishing, for no villager ever spurns a fish. Our only concern was that we might not reach the village soon enough, for unless we kept in the shade, the fish would spoil within an hour. In this climate death and dissolution are almost simultaneous.

Then ahead of us we saw a canoe. The poler wore a shirt. There could be no further question but that we were out of the Mareño country, for nothing could be more distastful to a Mareño—unless it were a traveller—than the thought of wearing clothes. The canoe disappeared round a point, the Vagabunda hot on its heels. A little fishing village, perched on a white sand beach in a tiny cove, lay behind the point. We zigzagged our way among the long rows of upright poles on which the fishermen dried their nets. As we drew near, a crowd gathered on the beach and several canoes pushed out to meet us, their crews shouting a welcome. Surrounded by the laughing, friendly, excited villagers, we came on shore.

An old woman sidled up to Ginger, and Ginger promptly invited her to help herself to the fish. She took three, Ginger two more, and the pair of them started off to the old woman's hut. Thus our friendships were cemented and matters arranged in Indian villages in Mexico. I called for the headman, and found that he was the man to whom I was talking. To him was turned over the business of dividing the fish. While he passed them out, I washed out the cockpit and tied the canoe to a mooring mast. Together we walked to the old woman's hut, followed by the crowd.

Ginger was sitting in the shade of the thatched shelter. Plans for a banquet had been arranged, she

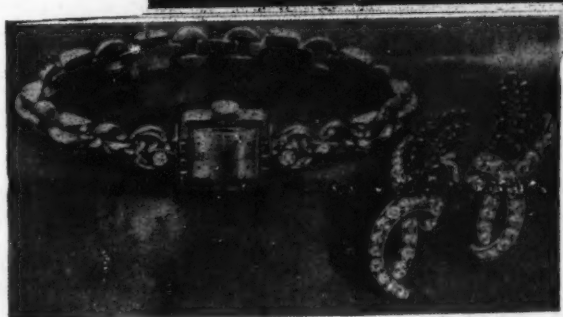
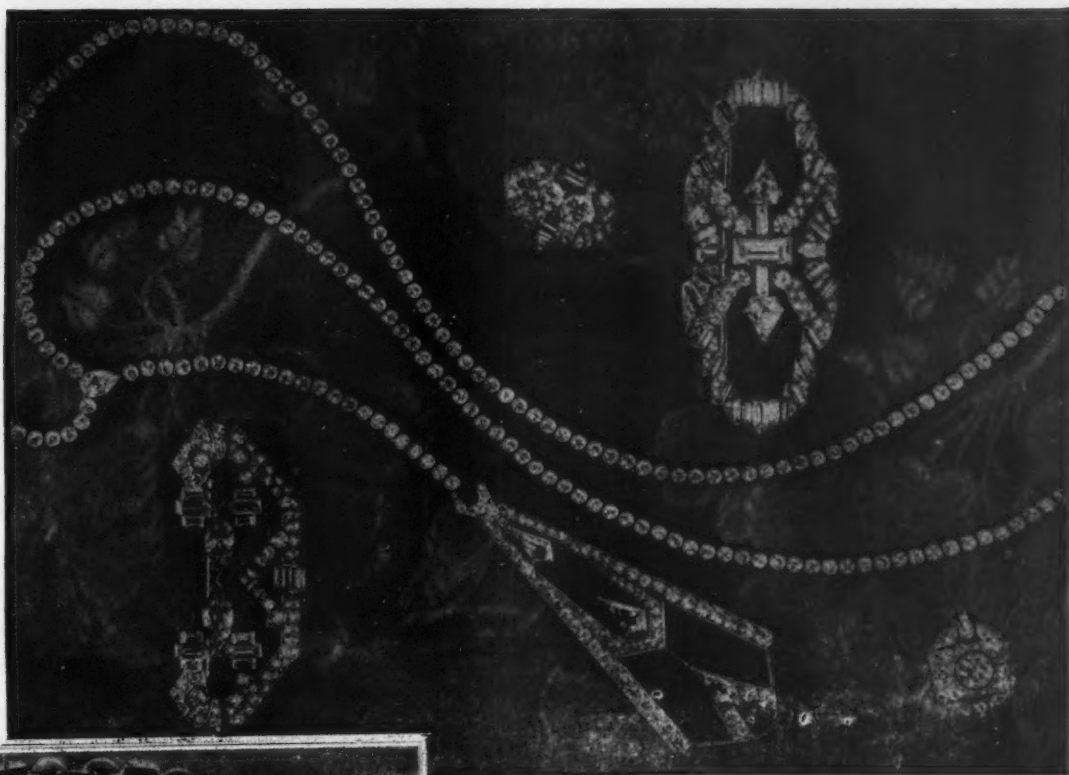
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informed us. Local resources for the event were to be supplemented from our stores. This was the Mexico that we knew and loved, simple, friendly, and unostentatious. In these little villages we were almost immediately caught up in a current of good feeling. The natives gave us whatever they had that they thought we needed, or wanted; and we returned the compliment. Sometimes only one or two people in a village spoke a Spanish of sorts, but that was seldom a bar to communication. Men's needs are similar the world over. We smiled, gestured, and did our share of the work. The entente cordiale was established.

While the women prepared the meal, I squatted in the shade with the men, who began asking questions. That we had come from Salina Cruz was accepted as a matter of course. They easily understood how we had managed to travel through the dry stretches; how we had ducked the northerners. But our escape from the Mareños was another matter. That was incomprehensible.

"Those Indios," they said, "are very bad. We suffer much from them. Often they rob us. Many of our people have met death at their hands. They sometimes come to our village and leave a woman who is with child. We are forced to take care of her, until she and her child are able to travel."

The men said the Mareños left their women at night while the village lay asleep. Failure on the villagers' part to take her in would be followed, of course, by swift retaliation. A baby had died in a village where a woman had been left. The Mareños killed the entire family who had taken care of its mother. Families in outlying districts were frequent-

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ly forced to support Mareños, who quartered themselves upon them for months at a time. The government occasionally sent in troops to punish the wild Indios, but it did little good, for the soldiers were helpless in the lagoon country.

The name of this village was Punta Flores, they said. Further on, connected with it by a trail, was another village called Paredon. These were the only two villages on the great pampa. A cart road connected Paredón and the inland city of Tonalá, where both villages traded their fish for other goods. Here again we found both our Mexican map and the United States hydrographic chart to be in error. The village of Paredón was shown to be some distance inland—not on the lagoon at all. Also Great Pampa, which we had just traversed, was mapped as a long, narrow body of water, instead of great inland sea with a maze of lagoons leading far inland.

Since their livelihood depended upon fishing, the villagers were keenly interested in finding out how we caught so many fish. I let them examine our fishing outfit, and instructed them in the method of making and using bone jigs. Everywhere the people were interested in knowing how to improve their simple techniques in securing food.

### In Duress . . .

Continued from page 10

to be all that it looks, for Puebla has always been a strategic point in every revolution of consequences, owing largely to its Catholic allegiance. The city and this jail figured prominently and strategically during its conquest by both the French and the United States armies of invasion.

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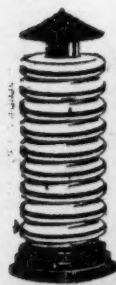




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Its cavernous entrance and massive gate only appeared difficult to get in or out. True, a few soldiers were lazing about. A stack of muskets stood unguarded in a rack in a far corner, which it seemed anyone might seize or carry off as souvenirs. We strode straight into the main gate and knocked at the wicket, without even explaining that we come from the mayor. Almost without question, the head turnkey unbarred the door and admitted us to a spacious patio. It was a perfect beehive for activity in which the whole eight hundred inmates were buzzing and carrying on their daily life in the sunshine just as nonchalantly as though they were free men come together for a pleasant sojourn in the courtyard of a great inn. We passed the offices of the warden and the commissary, all wide open partly on the prison yard, the office workers chatting and laughing, as though they were all one big happy family.

There were a number of departments, like stores, where prisoners with money could buy luxuries just as though they were in the town, especially food, which seemed to be the principal concern of all Mexican convicts. In the dead center of the two-acre prison yard was a pool with water spurting from pipes where perhaps a score of men were bathing, naked, scrubbing themselves and one another and seeming to have a lot of fun over it. Oddly, the percentage of Indian prisoners seemed to be lower than in Mexico City. There were few indications of their being vicious or confirmed criminals. To one unaware of the nature of the place, they must have appeared on the whole as not a bad lot of men. While it was true, we learned on inquiry, that their crimes had in the main been violent and bloody, yet, Spanish style, once they had avenged themselves, in either hot or cold blood, they settled down to pay the penalty with few regrets. Their crime had not been against society, but against individuals. The majority were at work, knitting some

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garment of clothing. We were scarcely noticed as we moved about among them, pausing now and then to scrutinize their handiwork. Each man seemed to have a complete cooking outfit and housekeeping kit, including a brazier, hanging on the wall or arranged about him in his appropriated space.

Our guide, though a keeper, wore neither uniform nor insignia. He carried a gun loosely in his belt, which any prisoner might easily have seized and possibly escaped, as one did on another occasion by holding a visitor in front of him as a shield. When we wanted information we asked a prisoner, and he usually gave it pleasantly as though he were a passer-by. Quite a few were entertaining their whole families, including wife, grandparents and children. We passed out of the yard through the high-walled basketball court, that also for long had been the shooting ground for political prisoners.

There was an irregular row of telltale pockmarks in the wall and a movable floor, said to be the pit into which the bodies fell. We climbed narrow steps to the cell tiers, each with the name of the inmate above the door. The rooms were seven by five feet; the bed simply a hard board like that on which the nuns of the Hidden Nunnery used to sleep. In every case there was some personal touch; usually a picture, many profane, but mostly religious. These cells were three tiers high, each one locked individually. There were a few solitary confinement cells, cut into the sinews of the thick walls, with solid doors, the only light and air coming through a slender vent leading of the roof. We looked down into a dismal inner court where the prison guards and employees ate. By comparison, the prisoners seemed to have much the better of it. In fact, the place seemed to be conducted largely like a philanthropic institution, with every inmate enjoying himself to an adequate degree. While there was no animation, neither was there coercion. For most of them, life went on with a difference—of freedom, possibly. But it was not that difference that mattered; life was the thing. Freedom was only a word.

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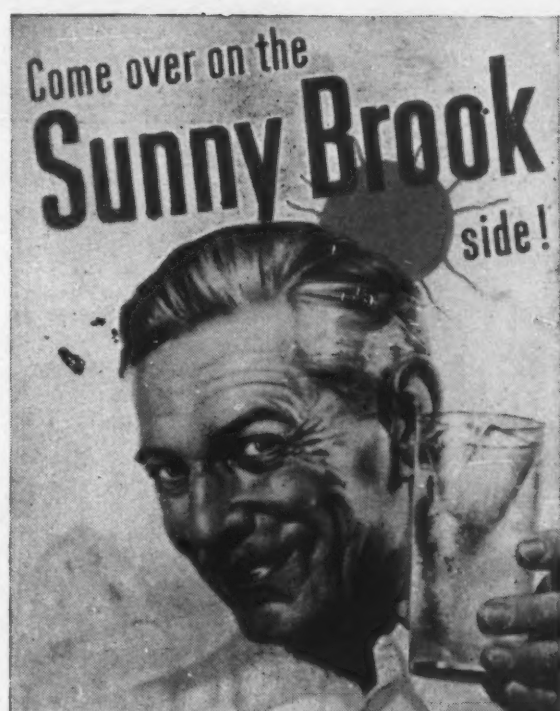
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Finally, I visited the State Prison in Mérida, capital of Yucatán. It had its own distinctive personality, just as the Yucatecans or Mayans are quite different from all other Mexicans. We made our application for admission on the spot, that is, without introduction, at the very gate of the picturesque jail bordering on one of the prettiest plazas of the city opposite the Zoo. The gate was patrolled as usual by a squad of happy-go-lucky soldiers. It seemed as though half the town was going in and out of the gate, so we had no trouble getting inside. We were admitted no farther than the "garden" as it was called, where we were directed to the warden who was with friends, having just come in from a horse-back ride. He was dressed like a charro, with all the silver trappings of a Hollywood cowboy. He toyed with one of his silver-filigree mounted pistols for a moment and then gave his consent. Beyond the prison garden we found a two-storied wall of bars, behind which were gathered the majority of the many hundreds of prisoners, all mixed in together, most of them full-blooded Mayan Indians. It all seemed a lark to them, so far as life was concerned. A half dozen of them were let out into the yard to act as salesmen for the wares they made in the chief industry of the jail. This was also the great local occupation, making hammocks of sisal. They were sold at an average price of twenty-five pesos, which the maker must split with the prison authorities. A prisoner hailed me in Oklahoma English. He was allowed to come out and talk to me. He told me that he had been betrayed by "these Mayans," although he confessed that he was a Mexican himself. They had accused him of murder and sentenced him to twenty years. He "borrowed" a package of cigarettes and two pesos. He seemed like such a nice young fellow. The keeper told us that he had committed the most cold-



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blooded murder in the history of the prison, taking two old ladies in a car to the mountains and cutting their throats. Having discussed the worst of Mexico's segregated criminals, we return to the general behavior of society. "The upper classes drink deeply in the evening; the laborer after work hours and all day Sunday; hence we have what is called Blue Monday, when no boss expects too much of his men," I was told. Actually I saw comparatively little drunkenness in Mexico, at least not to criminal degree. Principal Rocha of the Escuela Republica de Cuba assured me that drinking was undermining the lower stratum of society. She was a leader in the great Nonalcoholic Society, to which every one of her eight hundred school pupils belonged and worked for ardently. They had recited the Nonalcoholic pledge in unison and lustily sung the Nonalcoholic hymn for me. The most insidious breeder of criminality that I saw was the increasing use of marijuana, which has also spread alarmingly into the United States, where it is generally known as "reefers." Addicts simply smoke a species of hemp; marijuana, or cannabis indica, according to my friend, "is what they make the hangman's rope of!" there is no novelty in a reference to banditry below the Rio Grande, when it is ever so much more commonplace above it.

### Estetla . . .

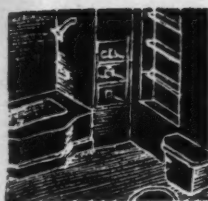
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mony, with the result that 95 per cent of the couples living in Estetla are not legally united. The Church stubbornly rejects a civil marriage; civil authorities refuse to register a merely religious ceremony. Neither recognizes the Mixtecan tribal marriage rite. The quarrel between Church and State, if they have ever heard of it, is a matter of supreme indifference to the Mexican.

Leonard Morales took me to see a mica deposit. One entire wall of a gulch was composed of bronze mica. Fine mica sand glittered like gold in the bed of the small stream at the bottom of the arroyo. The sight aroused latent gold fever in my blood. I immediately visioned trading the village's mica for a supply of quinine. I was personally acquainted with the manager of the USA-MEX and persuaded Leonardo to come with us to Oaxaca and make a deal for sale of the mica. In Mexico lack of roads retards exchange of goods, and depresses the standard of living. To reach market this mica would have to be carried by burro for a distance of 50 kilometers over the mountains. There was no possible way to avoid it.

Isolated Estetla's sole preoccupation was the problems of food and shelter. They had neither library, newspapers, nor movie. Music they had, quite good music made by the school's string band. The night before I left we were seated in the moonlight in the patio when two men appeared from out of the shadows and began to strum softly on their guitars. Others joined them. An old man came with his violin and sat upon the school steps and played and sang Mixtecan songs, among them the Temescal, a pretty, haunting air. Music charmed many from their huts. Silently they squatted in the moonlight, or crouched unobtrusively within the shadows of the building.

The next morning the band gave a 7-o'clock farewell serenata. At the last moment the principal decided to saddle his horse and accompany us for ten kilometers. The weather was fine. When Luis, Leonardo, Antonio and I mounted our horses and rode away, Leonardo's small mongrel, Tigre, at our heels,

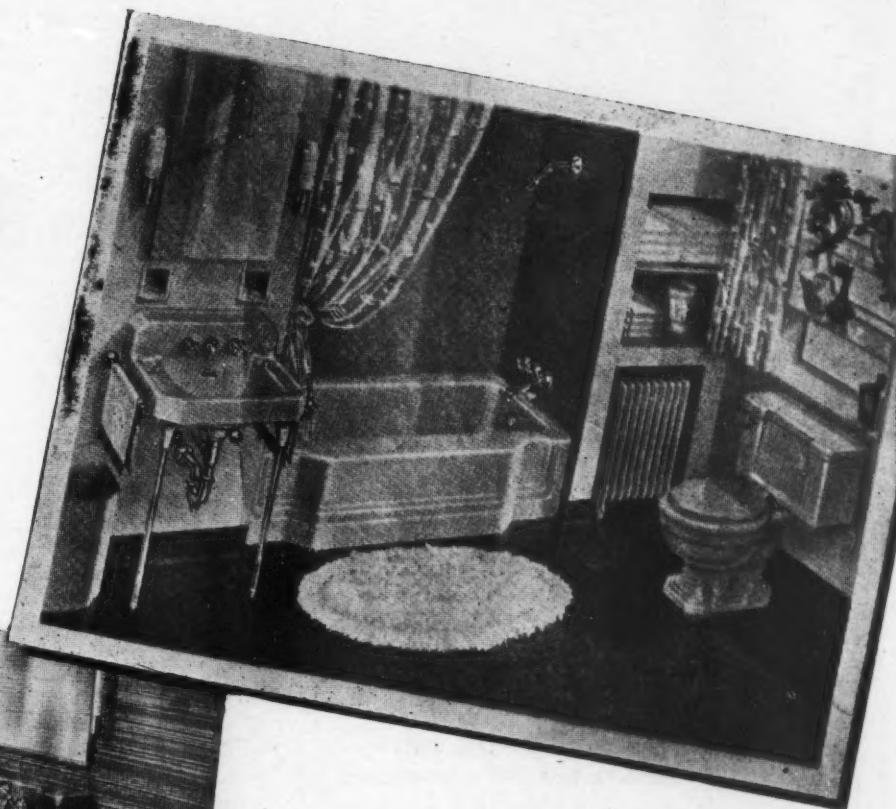


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the band struck up "Diana," a musical expression of approval peculiar to Mexico.

The air was crisp. We rode single file close by the bank of the foaming river, the first to greet the world, bejeweled with dewfall, the first to hear the bird song in the morning. Just to be alive was a thrilling adventure!

Finally we deserted the lively river, climbed up and over into another green valley. Near the end of this we looked down upon a lonely habitation, a white adobe building roofed with split pine shingles surrounded by half a dozen thatched huts, like a mother hen with her brood. Thus far the journey had been pleasant. Antonio decided to ride to Oaxaca and aid Leonardo with the mica deal. He scribbled a note to his assistant teacher and despatched it by an Indian runner from the settlement. We climbed to the top of the ridge, halted a few moments to view the magnificent tangle of wilds beyond, before descending into the other valley. Our luck had expended itself. The rains came. A steady downpour continued throughout the day and far into the night. Although in the tropics, the altitude was high and the bitterly cold rain chilled our bones. My Indian companions shivered violently, teeth chattered. The dog looked up appealingly. I suggested the men dismount and walk.

When they continued to shiver, I proposed lunch. In my little bag hung over one shoulder, I carried boiled corn, boiled eggs, an orange and half a dozen tortillas. The bag had faded and the now water-logged tortillas were tinted an exotic Mexican pink, streaked with blue and green. They tasted like soggy leather. Being a prudent woman I did not discard them at once. Our progress was slow and a 50-kilometer trip faced us. We dismounted, led our horses along an eyebrow trail in the lee of a ridge. In the pouring rain at an altitude of 8,000 feet we shivered and mumbled.

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ched cold wet corn on the cob. The dog also ate corn kernels.

On steep slippery clay my horse could not keep to his feet. I slid, rolled, and skidded in the mud. My raincoat was literally shredded. Once I lost my footing and slid helplessly toward a drop of several hundred feet. Leonardo ran to my aid, missed me. Fortunately I struck a tree and clung to the trunk. On the red clay slopes of a steep gully my horse slipped, rolled and barely missed crushing me. The dog was soon completely exhausted, and we took turns carrying him. By midafternoon, tired and hungry, I ate the tortillas. Only the dog condescended to share them.

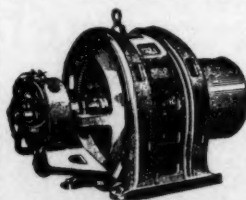
Once out of the mountains and at a lower altitude, we came to a tiny settlement and stopped at a house to ask for cigarettes. I saw a leaf-covered temescal in front of the hut, and the woman who sold us cigarettes carried a new baby in her arms. I was too tired to bet with Luis, though I am certain I could have won even with the evidence before him. The woman said the river a few hundred meters farther along was unfordable. We did not react to her statement. We rounded a bend in the road and were surprised to see a broad churning river. A crowd stood on the opposite shore watching it.

A man on our side of the water said we might possibly get across. It was a perilous adventure. No, there was no meson in the village. We conferred, decided to ford the river. Leonardo spurred his horse and plunged into the swirling torrent, was swept downstream and struggled ashore far below the ford. We rode upstream, hoping to land in the right place. Tigre whimpered.

"What about the dog?" I asked Antonio.

"He'll have to swim," he answered heartlessly.

"He'll drown!" I shouted. But he spurred his horse into the stream and my words were lost in the noise of the river. I motioned an Indian on the bank to hand him up to me, tucked him under my arm, urged my horse into the water, and then gave him the



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rein. Confused by the foam and boiling eddies in midstream, he stumbled on a boulder, and fell upon his knees. Water swept over us. I clung to the dog and saddle. The horse floundered to his feet. Guiding the animal, directed by the people on shore, I emerged dripping.

The fifty-kilometer journey we hoped to make in eight hours required fifteen. Now out of danger, we strung out along the road, each for himself. I endeavored to keep the white rump of Leonardo's pinto within sight. On a dark, muddy road, four hours out of Oaxaca we encountered groups of Indians returning home in the rain. Upon hearing the splash of such a caravan ahead, we called "Adiós" to forewarn them of our presence and thus avoid a head-on crash. Farther along we passed a group of rural folk huddled in a circle about a small campfire. Others had taken shelter beneath an abandoned structure and lay rolled in dark serapes on the porch.

After sighting the first feeble lights in the distance we rode another hour before reaching Oaxaca. Luis was a city man. He early gave up trying to keep pace in the dark with the two Estetlans and myself, and actually arrived three hours later than we. In Oaxaca we sought a burro hotel for our horses. The men went to a meson while I took a taxi to Hotel Ruiz. Wet and covered with mud, the collar and sleeves all that remained of my transparent raincoat, I was a dilapidated sight. I aroused the attendant who unlocked the hotel door and permitted me to enter. He stared as if at an apparition. He said it was far too late for either food or a hot bath. Nothing could be done until mañana.

"Mañana," I mocked, bitterly. Cold and supperless I slunk into bed.

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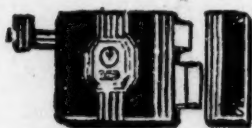
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### Quiroga . . .

Continued from page 12

upward and the crowns are more or less flattened. Some of the men in the villages looked like a sturdy breed of Nipponese—with good shoulders and stout straight necks.

"It's Japanese," Wagus said.

"It's Chinese," Thérèse said.

"I know," said Dr. Hoagland, "the houses are like those outside Manila."

"Well, not to make a bad pun," Wagus said, "whatever the inspiration, the region certainly has a Mongolian slant."

"It is like this," Señor Sánchez said, "from here to the Pacific—we are not much more than a hundred and fifty miles from the ocean. Many believe than the Chinese and the Japs were here before the Spaniards."

We counted off villages like beads on a chaplet and then somewhere after Carapán, we went over the mountains and passed Paracho, where the famous guitars are made and the folk songs are composed, and soon came upon a region like nothing else we had ever seen. The road begrimed with black dust. The hillside trees stood stripped of foliage, stark and naked as gray skeletons. The ashecolored land looked like something accursed.

If a state-maintained road had not run through forbidding barrenness, one could have imagined him-

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self back in the graveyard of some prehistoric age. If the fossil remains of Scelidotheriums and Megatheriums had strewn the wasteland, it would have seemed quite natural, and in harmony with the scenic composition. When we passed through a gap in the mountains we saw the monster whose poisonous breath had wrought the desolation. There rose the volcanic cone of Parícutín, making a magnificent and terrible silhouette against the ethereal blue of the sky. Its gray-black smoke ascended heavenward, four miles straight into the windless air. The fuming vapors were like a gigantic obelisk erected to some god of the underworld.

The terrestrial globe's youngest volcano was in late June of 1943 just four months old. A humble cornpatch in the little valley called Cuityúzero was the scene of its birth on February 20, 1943. The sole witness to the first worldly breath it drew was a peasant named Dionisio Pulido. At the time he was engaged in the most peaceful of ancient occupations: sowing seed in fresh-made furrows. A puzzling wisp of smoke rose at his feet like some genie from a bottle mouth. In bewilderment Dionisio attempted to stamp out the unnatural smoke with his sandaled feet and then tried to beat it out with his palm-straw hat. To his astonishment, the trail of smoke widened swiftly, and with a groan like a god in pain the surface of the earth opened before him. Flames, rocks, and ashes spewed forth.

In terror, Dionisio fled for his life. Soon the citizens of the neighboring village of Parícutín were mumbling prayers, snatching up possessions, and fleeing from the radius of hurtling red-hot stones. The volcano grew with incredible celerity. Out of the bowels of the earth it drew up the crude materials to make itself into a hillock, then into a hill and then into a mountain. And in the process, its poisonous breath blasted the growing things on the earth's surface. Trees, which cannot uproot themselves and run like man and beast, stood twisting in agony as they were gradually singed to death by peppering hot cinders or stripped of their outer bark like chained martyrs flayed alive. Within five days a whole square



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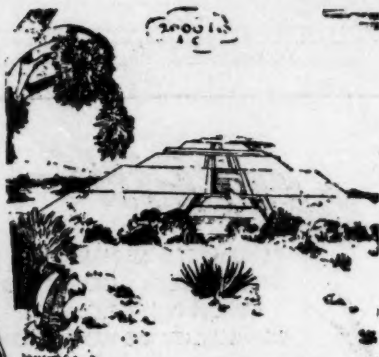
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re mile of land was drowned in liquid lava that cooled into porous rock. When the prevailing winds were from the northwest, dust particles reached Mexico City, almost two hundred miles away.

Geologists, meteorologists, and scientists of various categories were drawn to Parícutín as if it were a lodestone whose influence reached around the globe. Photographs were taken of the baby volcano's progress day by day, week by week, month by month. It was a monstrous growth. Within a year the cone was to reach almost twelve hundred feet above the surface of the high plateau. Several hundred square miles of agricultural lands were to be depopulated, except for intrepid Indians who found temporary livelihood by guiding tourists on burrobac up the stony mountain paths to get a closer view of the flame-spitting wonder.

Here in our own time was happening an event that Humboldt might have happily given a few last years of his ninety-year life to have witnessed. And while an early view of Parícutín would not have measured up to what he considered the crowning glory of his adventurous career—the climbing of Ecuador's Chimborazo—it undoubtedly would have much excited and elated him.

I asked Señor Sánchez to stop the car while I took pictures of the great smoke column. On the roadside I stooped to pick up a handful of the black volcanic dust. It was almost as fine as talcum powder. I could imagine an Indian mother without benefit of white powder being tempted to use it to soothe a baby's chafed bottom. It seemed strange to be holding a handful of stuff that had come from thirty miles within the earth, through basalt and granite and the shallow sedimentary layers just under the earth's surface. Dr. Hoagland reminded me that the earth's crust floats thinly on a mass of boiling liquid rock—four thousand miles of molten lava to the center of the globe, held within bounds by what amounts to a film of skin. And the thin skin is as thick as it is only because the process of cooling has been going on for some two billion years, if the scientists are right. In comparison to the fiery furnace within the globe,

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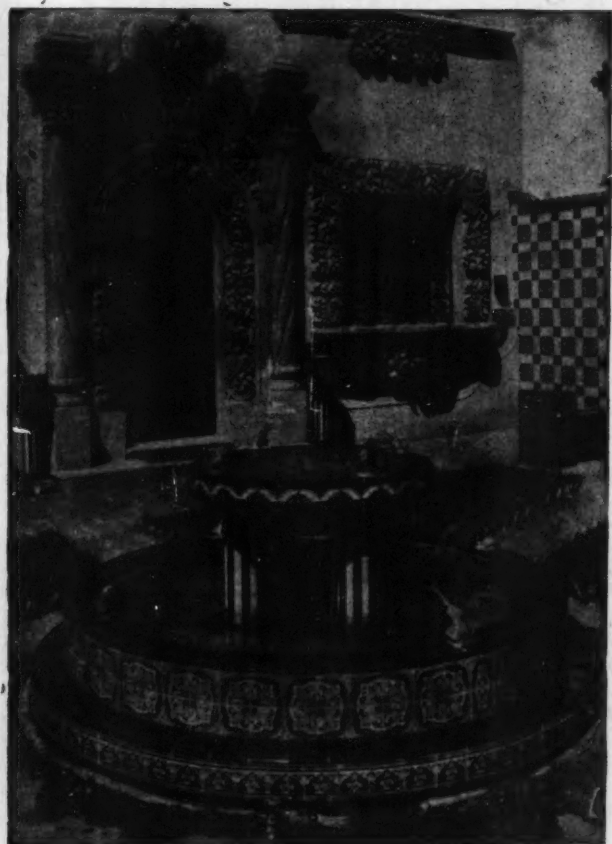
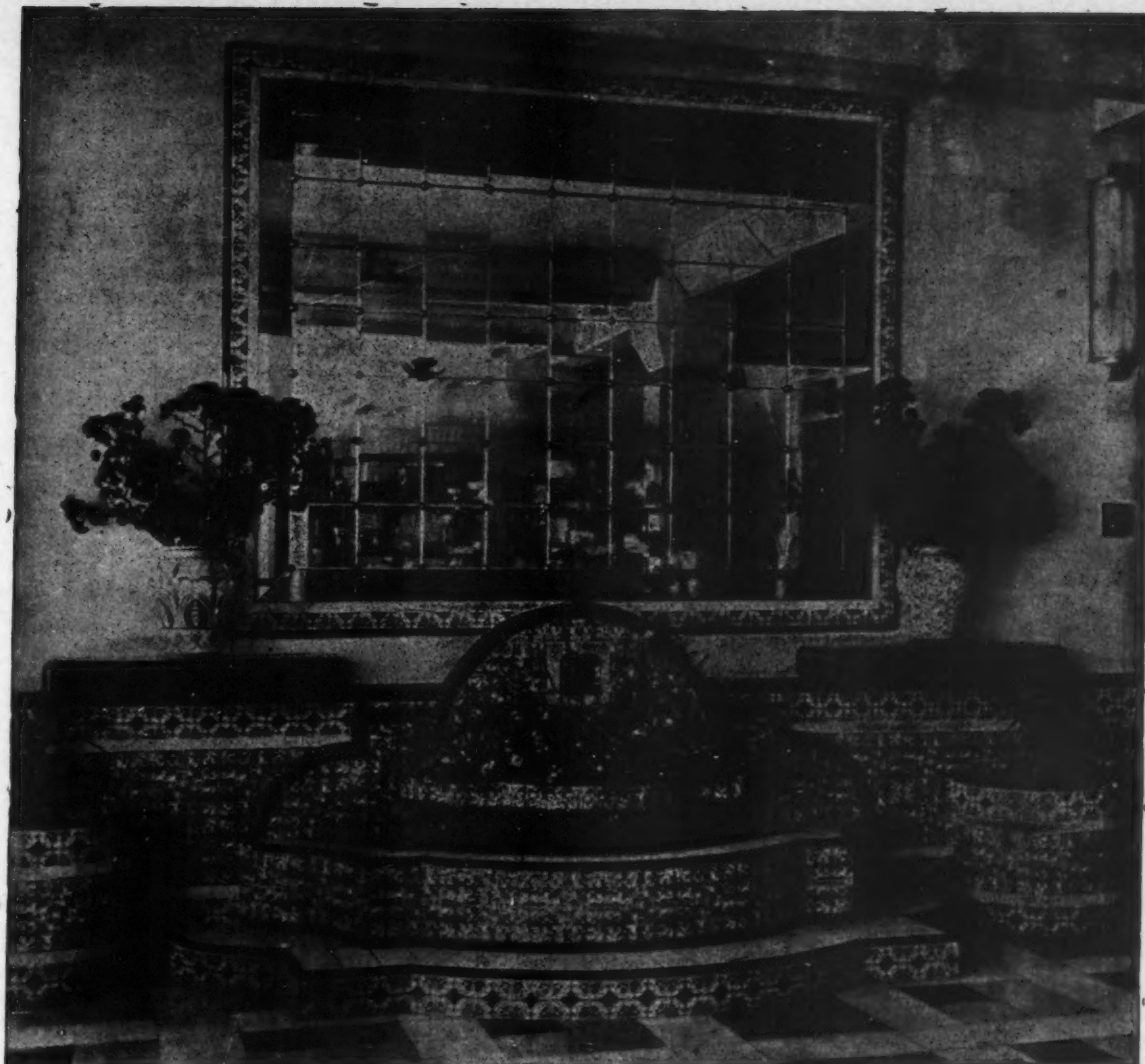
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the crust beneath men's feet is no more than the fuzzy skin of a peach compared to the entire inside of fruit pulp and stone.

Such scientific reflection makes all life seem extraordinarily unstable and precarious. What does little world of man really add to in the overwhelming face of a universe of millions of other suns and their enchained planets and earthy satellites? And yet how phenomenal it is that mankind had ever evolved at all. How really marvelous it is that man has already achieved the control he has over what are called the forces of nature. But whatever man may come to learn of Truth, the sum of his knowledge can never be more remarkable than the fact that man possesses the faculty of appreciating Beauty. A strange concomitant of being earth-bound, with a compulsion to survive, is that mystical awareness of a poetry in nature's wondrous mutations.

While men came from afar to marvel at the volcano, Dionisio Pulido grieved more for the loss of his sustaining corn than he felt elated by the discovery that immortalized his humble name. When the first strangers stood rapt in awful admiration before the infernal spectacle the peasant turned his back on the monster and beat his breast and sobbed: "Oh, my cornfield, my poor cornfield!"

As we drove on and the landscape slowly changed from skeleton gray and black to vital green, Hoagland recalled that scientists have proclaimed the earth's crust to be thinner along the rim of the Pacific from San Francisco to lower Chile. Doubtless that is the reason for Mexico's possessing more extinct volcanoes than any other equal area in the world. And it is these infinite volcanic peaks that give the land its picturesque difference. Is it also possible that living a trifle nearer to the inner ball of molten fire has an influence on the Mexicans themselves, and set off the rending upheavals of their history? Is there something more to the matter than coincidence?



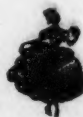
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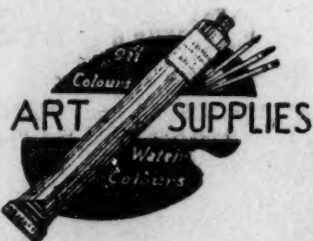
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**Stamping out Illiteracy . . .**

Continued from page 26

owns and occasionally reads a Spanish New Testament... This man has also come very recently to read the Mérida newspaper, which is occasionally sent to Chan Kon for the teacher; sometimes he explains to others of the village items that have interested him.

Although the educators of Mexico are trying conscientiously to adapt the teaching of the schools to the environment in which they are situated, there is still much to be done on this score. Thus Beals writes of the Village of Cherán:

"With all due acknowledgment of the effort and sincerity involved in the school system, the Cherán schools do not train children in any real sense for life in Cherán. The Cherán resident completing the school training has little advantage over his unschooled fellows in following the farming routines of the community. If he can read and write he perhaps has some less chance of being swindled in business transactions and more opportunity of rising to some municipal office. If his education is effective, however, and is put to use, it is by moving out of the basic pattern of Cherán. Such a person may become a storekeeper or a mill operator, where his education will be of some slight service to him. The major advantage of school training is to better equip some individuals to cope with the mestizo world which impinges on Cherán to some extent. Even so, the school child acquires little knowledge of rights and responsibilities in a larger world. Insofar as the education is effective and is utilized—and this is even more markedly true of those going on for more advanced education—the effect is to move the individual out of the culture of Cherán. If he stays in Cherán he tends to become an exploiter rather than a producer, or to occupy a position where he furnishes some liaison between the rest of the population and the mestizo world. Or more commonly, he moves out of Cherán culture completely, residing in some other

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part of Mexico. Only to a very small extent and in a very limited number of cases does an individual become a better producer, that is, a better farmer; or practice a trade learned through schools; or become a force and example guiding the community to better housing, reformed diets, better health practices, or higher standards of community organization. Formal education is still not geared to the needs and problems of Cherán life and is and will remain relatively ineffective until it becomes of obvious utility to the average Cherán resident. In other words, until the educational process is conceived on first of all from the standpoint of Cherán culture, instead of from the standpoint of national needs or theories, it will not be effective. And when education becomes geared to Cherán needs, paradoxically, it can then be effectively geared to national objectives."

Thus the problem of the education in the rural Mexico is not merely a matter of teaching the fundamentals of reading, writing, and arithmetic. It involves, as well, the teaching of the rudiments of sanitation and sound health practices and elementary but efficient techniques for making a living; the establishing of minimum housing standards that are realizable in a given physical and economic environment; and the development of communication facilities of all types in order that the thousands of insolated and separately distinct little communities may become integrated into the life of the nation so that literacy may be of some use to them.



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